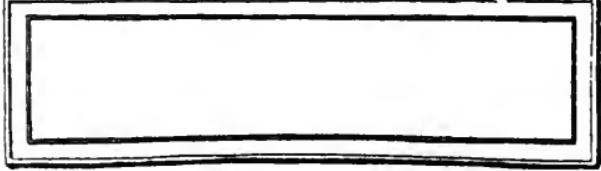
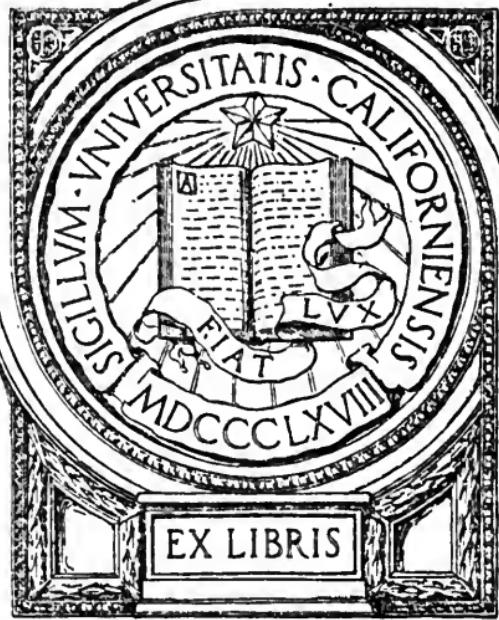


lifornia
ional
lity

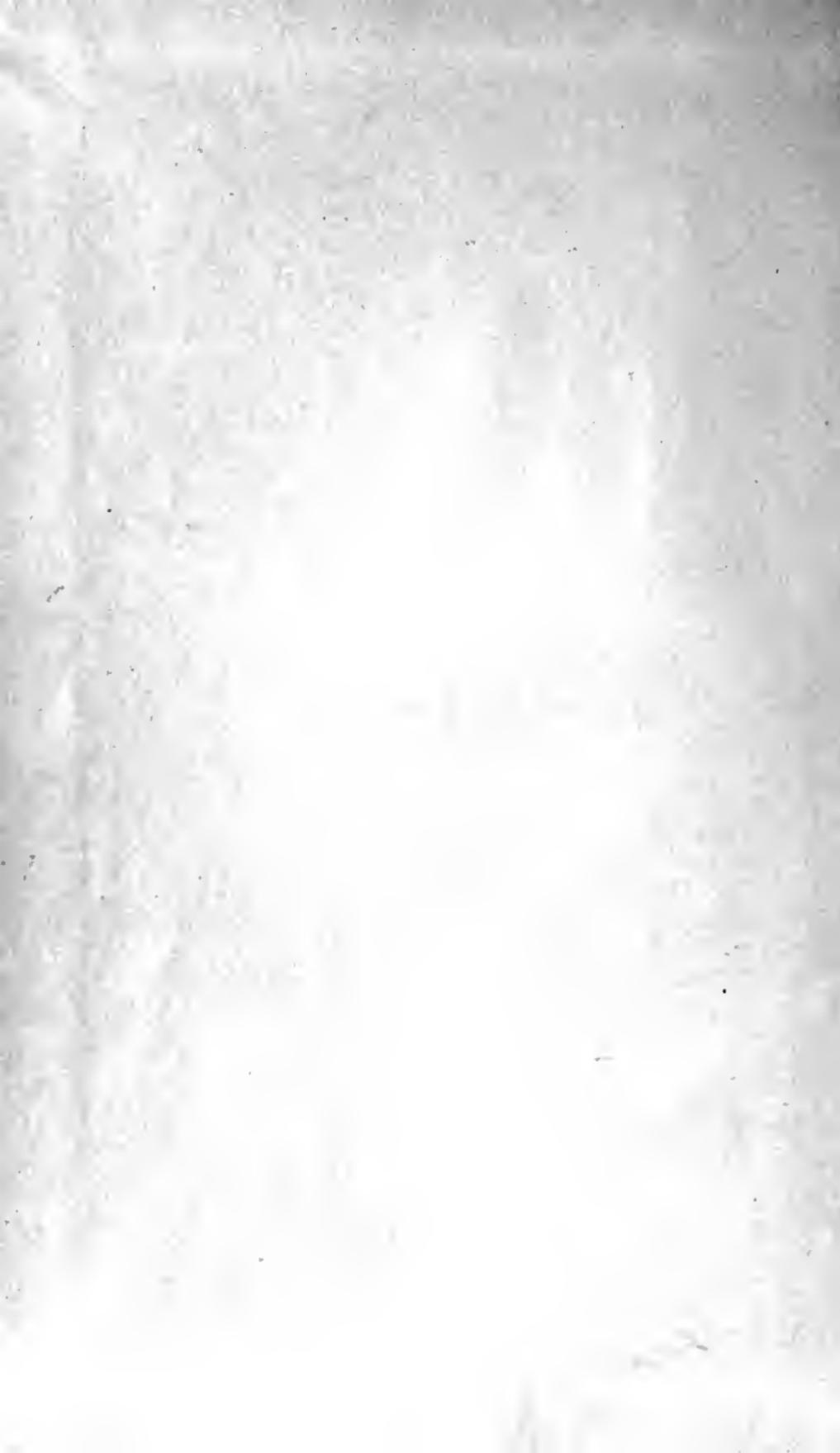
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
AT LOS ANGELES



UNIVERSITY of CALIFORNIA
AT
LOS ANGELES
LIBRARY



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation



**BEETHOVEN AND HIS
FORERUNNERS**



2363

BEETHOVEN AND HIS FORERUNNERS

BY

22022

DANIEL GREGORY MASON

AUTHOR OF "FROM GRIEG TO BRAHMS"

NEW YORK

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

LONDON: MACMILLAN & CO., LTD.

1911

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

22022

COPYRIGHT, 1904,
BY THE MACMILLAN COMPANY.

Set up and electrotyped. Published November, 1904. Reprinted August, 1911.

Norwood Press:

Berwick & Smith Co., Norwood, Mass., U.S.A.

MUSIC
LIBRARY
ML

390

M 38 5

CONTENTS

	PAGE
I THE PERIODS OF MUSICAL HISTORY	I
II PALESTRINA AND THE MUSIC OF MYSTICISM	43
III THE MODERN SPIRIT	79
IV THE PRINCIPLES OF PURE MUSIC	123
✓ V HAYDN	173
✓ VI MOZART	211
✓ VII BEETHOVEN	249
VIII BEETHOVEN (CONTINUED)	289
IX CONCLUSION	333



CHAPTER I

THE PERIODS OF MUSICAL HISTORY

22022



THE modern view of history is vivified by a principle scarcely dreamed of before the middle of the last century ; the conception which permeates all our interpretations of the story of the world, which illuminates our study of all its phases, was by our grandfathers apprehended either vaguely or not at all. For them, history dealt with a more or less random series of happenings, succeeding each other accidentally, unaccountably, and at hazard ; each single event, determined by causes peculiar to itself, was without relation to all the others. Political and social history, for example, was an account of battles, sieges, revolutions, governments ; of kings, warriors, and statesmen. Its salient features were special occasions and indi-

vidual men: Marathon and Waterloo, Alexander, Cæsar, Alfred, Napoleon. Of pervasive social movements, tendencies of human feeling and thought, developments of industries, institutions, laws, and customs by a gradual process in which great numbers of personally insignificant men played their part, little account was taken. Facts were facts, and had no hidden significance, no mutual interaction, no cumulative force, momentum, or direction.

Far otherwise do we interpret the story of the world. Inspired by the great doctrine of the nineteenth century, the doctrine of evolution, first formulated by biology, but immediately applied to all realms of knowledge, we read in events a continuous movement, a coherent growth, a gradual, vast, and single process. For us, individual events and men sink into insignificance in comparison with the great drama of which they are only acts and actors. For us, great popular movements, instinctive strivings, of which the men and women under their sway were unconscious, vast blossomings of vital energy the roots of which were far below the surface of the human mind, rise into relief as the true interests of the historian, and we interpret all particular happen-

THE PERIODS OF MUSICAL HISTORY

ings and special persons in the light of these universal tendencies. In geology we trace the continuous formation of the earth through innumerable years ; in zoölogy we study those slow but constant transformations of animals which are effected by natural selection and the survival of the fittest ; in sociology we examine the painful yet inevitable crystallization out of the human spirit of such ideas as responsibility, liberty, justice ; in philosophy we learn of the subtle implications of our nature, and so learning, substitute a human God for the idols of savages and the remote tyrannical deities of half-developed religions. There is not a branch of our thought in which this way of interpreting life as a process, this conceiving of it as dynamic and vital rather than static and inert, has not enlarged our outlook, deepened our sense of the sacredness and wonder of the universe, and filled our spirits with a new freedom, enthusiasm, and hope.

Peculiarly interesting is the application of this mode of study to the art of music. The expression of feeling through sounds combined in beautiful forms, gives us an opportunity, as cannot be too often pointed out,* for a much freer and

* See the author's "From Grieg to Brahms," pp. 219-223.

more self-determined activity than we can enjoy in our other artistic pursuits. Because the art of music, both in its material and in its content, is less shackled, less thwarted in its characteristic processes, than the representative arts, its evolution is remarkably obvious and easy to trace.

Its material, in the first place, is a product of man's free selection; that complex system of musical tones which he has constructed by many centuries of work, is his own, to use as he will, in a sense in which language, natural objects, and physical substances can never be. Whereas the growth of poetry, of painting, of sculpture, of architecture, is complicated and distorted by a thousand external conditions, that of music is determined by its own inner laws alone,—by the laws, that is to say, of sound-production, of sound-perception, and of psychology. In the second place, the content of music, that which it expresses by means of these freely selected and composed tones, is purely internal. It is easy to see that the objects of musical expression, namely, human emotions in their essence, reduced, so to speak, to their lowest terms, are more fluid to manipulation than the comparatively fixed, indocile, and external objects of the

THE PERIODS OF MUSICAL HISTORY

representative arts. By virtue, then, both of its material medium and of its ideal content, music enjoys, among human modes of expression, a unique freedom and autonomy. It grows, not under pressure from outside, but by its own inner vitality ; its forms are determined, not by correspondence with anything in the heavens or on the earth, but, like those of the snow-crystals, by the inexorable laws that govern it ; and the particular changes it undergoes in its evolution, marking merely successive incarnations of tendencies and potencies always implicit in it, can be traced with comparative ease, clearness, and certainty.

But however unmistakably musical history may reveal an evolutionary process, it does not reveal that process as perfectly regular and uniform. That general tendency from a low toward a high state of organization, with increase in definiteness, coherence, and heterogeneity, which readers of Herbert Spencer expect in any evolutionary series, does characterize the growth of music as a whole ; but within the large general process we also observe, as we do in many other cases of evolution of any degree of complexity, many momentary phases sharply marked

off from one another, many separate and distinct periods, like the chapters in a book or the acts in a play. Each period, beginning tentatively, maturing slowly, and culminating in music which carries its characteristic effects to the highest possible pitch, is succeeded by another, presenting the same phases of growth, but seeking effects quite different. All the periods hang together in a large view ; yet they are, after all, diverse in character, and therefore capable of being distinguished, and even dated.

An analogy offered by certain well-known chemical processes may help to make comprehensible this periodic nature of musical evolution. Chemists have a term, "critical point," by which they name a stage in the behavior of a substance, under some systematic treatment, at which it suddenly undergoes some striking change, some catastrophic transformation. Put, for example, a lump of ice in a crucible and apply an even heat by which its temperature is raised, say, one degree each minute. Here is a systematic treatment of the ice, a steady influence exerted upon it. Yet, curiously enough, this ice which is being so equably acted upon will not change its form in the equable, regular

THE PERIODS OF MUSICAL HISTORY

fashion we might expect. It will seem to undergo little or no change until, at a given moment, suddenly, it passes into water, a liquid wholly different in appearance from the original solid. It has reached a "critical point." Continue the heating, and presently another critical point will be reached, at which, with equal suddenness, the liquid will be transformed into a vapor—steam. These catastrophes, in which the physical properties of the substance suddenly change, are conditioned, of course, by its chemical nature. They take place in the midst of a systematic treatment which we might expect to produce only gradual, inconspicuous effects, but which, as a matter of fact, produces a series of events as strikingly differentiated one from another as the acts of a drama.

It is in a similar way that, in the history of music, the tonal material used, under the systematic treatment of man's æsthetic faculty, has been constrained by its nature to undergo sudden changes, to recrystallize in novel ways, to take on unwonted aspects which initiate new periods. When the possibilities of one sort of tone-combination are nearly or quite exhausted, the keener minds of a generation, led by grop-

ing but unerring instinct, grasp an unused principle of organization, latent in the material, and inaugurate a new style. This in turn runs its course, develops its resources, reaches its perfection, and is succeeded by another, which, after due time, is also superseded. All these periods are but moments in one vast evolution, successive blossomings from the one root of human feeling expressible in music; yet each has its individual qualities, its peculiar style, its special masters. It is possible both to trace certain general tendencies through them all, and to define other special qualities in which each is peculiar; and it will be worth while, before passing on to our proposed study of the particular period of Beethoven, to describe thus in general terms the salient features of the evolution as a whole, and to characterize, however briefly, the individual periods we can discriminate in it.

In the most general point of view, an evolution, of whatever sort, is a progress from what Spencer calls "indefinite, incoherent, homogeneity," to what, consistently if rather overwhelmingly, he calls "definite, coherent, heterogeneity." All low forms of life, that is to say, are so homo-

THE PERIODS OF MUSICAL HISTORY

geneous in constitution as to be comparatively indefinite and incoherent; their parts, being all very much alike, cannot be built up into definite, strongly cohesive structures. A jelly fish, made up of thousands of but slightly differentiated cells, and without legs, arms, head, or any viscera worth mentioning except stomach, is doubtless a useful animal, but not one of pronounced individuality or solidarity. A savage tribe, consisting of many human beings almost indistinguishable from one another as regards character, strength, accomplishments, or powers of leadership, is a similar phenomenon in a different field, a sort of social jelly fish.

In higher forms of life, on the contrary, such as vertebrate animals and civilized communities, the elementary parts are sufficiently diverse to be interwoven into highly individual and compact organisms. The variety of the atoms or molecules makes possible a great solidarity in the molar unit they compose, since the uniqueness and indissolubility of a structure is directly proportionate to the diversity of the elements that compose it. A man, if he is to attain the dignity of manhood, must be more than a stomach; he must knit into his single unity a bony

skeleton, a circulatory system, a brain and nervous apparatus, complicated viscera, and heart, mind, and spirit. A state depends for its vitality on the varied characters and abilities of its citizens; it must have laborers, artisans, merchants, sailors, soldiers, students, and statesmen. In the second book of his "Republic," Plato describes the differentiation of talents and pursuits in the citizens on which depends the advance in civilization of the society. Such an increase in differentiation of the parts, accompanied by increasing definiteness and coherence in the wholes, characterizes every process of evolution.

The history of music is the history of such an evolution. Music began with vague, unlocated sounds, not combined with one another, but following at haphazard, and but slightly contrasted in pitch or duration. Gradually, under the inconceivably slow yet irresistible influence of men's selective and constructive faculty, these sounds took on definiteness, were fixed in pitch, were measured in time, were knit into phrases and themes as words are knit into sentences, were combined simultaneously in chords as individuals are combined in commun-

ties ;—became, in a word, the various, clearly defined, and highly organized family of tones we use in modern music. Two passages from Spencer's "First Principles" will bring before us very clearly the advance music has made towards heterogeneity in its elements, on the one hand, and towards definiteness and coherence in its wholes, on the other. "It needs," he says, "but to contrast music as it is with music as it was, to see how immense is the increase of heterogeneity. We see this . . . on comparing any one sample of aboriginal music with a sample of modern music—even an ordinary song for the piano ; which we find to be relatively highly heterogeneous, not only in respect of the varieties in the pitch and in the length of the notes, the number of different notes sounding at the same instant in company with the voice, and the variations of strength with which they are sounded and sung, but in respect of the changes of key, the changes of time, the changes of timbre of the voice, and the many other modifications of expression : while between the old monotonous dance-chant and a grand opera of our own day, with its endless orchestral complexities and vocal combina-

tions, the contrast in heterogeneity is so extreme that it seems scarcely credible that the one should have been the ancestor of the other."* Of the corresponding increase in coherence and definiteness he writes as follows: "In music, progressive integration is displayed in numerous ways. The simple cadence embracing but a few notes, which in the chants of savages is monotonously repeated, becomes, among civilized races, a long series of different musical phrases combined into one whole; and so complete is the integration, that the melody cannot be broken off in the middle, nor shorn of its final note, without giving us a painful sense of incompleteness. When to the air, a bass, a tenor, and an alto are added; and when to the harmony of different voice-parts there is added an accompaniment; we see exemplified integrations of another order, which grow gradually more elaborate. And the process is carried a stage higher when these complex solos, concerted pieces, choruses, and orchestral effects, are combined into the vast ensemble of a musical drama; of which, be it remembered, the artistic perfection largely consists in the subor-

* "First Principles," American edition, p. 358.

THE PERIODS OF MUSICAL HISTORY

dination of the particular effects to the total effect.”* In innumerable ways, which these passages will perhaps suffice to suggest, the material of music has undergone a continuous, orderly, and progressive process of development, from its earliest days down to our own. It has exemplified, in short, an evolution from “indefinite, incoherent, homogeneity” to “definite, coherent, heterogeneity.”

Concomitantly with this special evolution of the sound-material of music, moreover, has gone on a more general evolution of human faculties, which has involved a gradual turning away of men’s attention from comparatively low forms of musical effect to those higher forms which require for their appreciation a good deal of concentration, perception, and power of intellectual synthesis. What was the exclusive concern of the earliest musicians became, as time went on, but a factor in a more complex artistic enjoyment. In order to understand this aspect of the matter clearly, we shall have to distinguish as accurately as possible three kinds of musical effect, all indispensable to music worthy of the name, yet not of equal dignity and value.

*Op. cit., p. 326.

There is, in the first place, the direct sensuous effect of the sounds, their deliciousness as sensations. Musical tones gratify the ear just as light and color gratify the eye, agreeable tastes the palate, aromatic odors the nose, and soft, warm surfaces the touch. A single tone from a flute, a violin, or a horn, is as delightful as a patch of pure color, white, red, or purple. To listen to music is, at least in part, to bathe in a flood of exquisite aural sensation. This immediate value for our sense of the "concord of sweet sounds" is a fundamental, legitimate, and important one, to deny or disparage which is to confess oneself insensitive or a prude. All music depends for a part of its appeal on its primary sensuous quality.

In the second place, music has what we call expressive value. Feelings, of surprising depth and variety, it can arouse in us, by inducing, through the contagiousness of rhythm and melody, tendencies to make those bodily motions and vocal sounds which are the natural accompaniment of our emotions.* These tendencies, of course, remain incipient; they do

* For a fuller statement of this theory of musical expression, see "From Grieg to Brahms," pp. 6-11.

THE PERIODS OF MUSICAL HISTORY

not discharge in actual movements greater than the tapping of the foot in "keeping time" and a slight contraction of the vocal cords; but even this faint organic commotion suffices to arouse those vivid feelings with which we listen to expressive music. It is worth while to note further that these feelings are in themselves necessarily most general and undefined, hardly more than moods of animation, excitement, apprehensiveness, solemnity, or depression. Their particular coloring is always imparted either by words or titles, or by the associations of the individual listener. On that very fact depend both the poignancy and the variety of musical expression.

3 The third and highest value of music is its æsthetic value, or beauty. This value, which springs from the delight we take in perceiving, or mentally organizing our sensations and ideas, is precisely analogous to the æsthetic value of the other arts, as, for example, the beauty of sonnets and other highly articulated poetic forms, of well-composed pictures, of finely-proportioned sculpture, of symmetrical and harmonious architecture. It depends, in general, on the perception of unity in a mass of various impres-

sions, and is but one example of a type of satisfaction we are capable of finding in all the departments of our experience. Wherever, confronted by many objects, sensations, thoughts, or feelings, we are able to gain a sense of their coherence, inter-relation, and essential oneness, we get the characteristic æsthetic value. To win it is the highest success we know. To perceive unity in the bewildering complexity of our experience, is to possess, in the realm of knowledge, truth; in the realm of practice, character; in the realm of art, beauty. Moreover, since perception is a far more active, self-directed process than either sensation or emotion, which are in large degree passively suffered, its contribution to our mental life has for us a deeper charm, a more far-reaching significance, than that of any other faculty. Beauty transfigures all elements that may coexist with it in the mind. In the intellectual sphere, for example, we understand far more deeply the phenomenon when we know its species and genus, and "science is but classified knowledge." In practical life, all the little every-day events, the petty pleasures and pains, take on, when we view them in relation to a conceived unity in our characters and destinies, a

new significance. Similarly in music, values of the first two species, sweetness of sound and emotional expressiveness, can be transfigured by formal beauty ; there is no tone that is not sweeter when it embodies a lovely melody ; there is no emotion that is not apotheosized by association with others in a harmonious whole, or that does not defeat itself when it stands out single, and will not merge itself in the organism. No music is wholly devoid of any one of the three values ; but the greatest music uses the first two only as the materials of the third.

L
T It is easy to see, however, that supreme as the æsthetic value of music may be, men could arrive at an appreciation of it only after a long novitiate and training. To enjoy the sensuous beauty of sweet sounds one needs only ears ; to be moved by melodies and rhythms that strongly suggest those vocal utterances and bodily motions which are the natural avenues of emotion, requires but a slightly more complex appreciative mechanism, the mechanism of organic sensations and their associations in the regions of naïve feeling ; but to perceive the manifold inter-relationship, and the final unity, of groups of tones combined together by relations in pitch

and in time, one needs a keen ear, an awakened memory, a capacity for tracing unity under the mask of variety,—in a word, a thoroughly trained and concentrated mind. Musical art could reach a stage in which all three of its values were associated in due proportion and proper adjustment, only through a gradual progress beginning with stages in which it was but the embodiment of sensuous, or at most of sensuous and emotional, values. That it did, as a matter of fact, go through these evolutionary phases, can be demonstrated by a brief and summary account of the actual periods in its history.

In the first periods that we can make out by theory and deduction—prehistoric periods that left no records—the values sought appear to have been preponderantly sensuous and expressive. The earliest savages, like all children even to this day, who make a noise for the mere joy of it, probably used their voices and their instruments chiefly as nerve-stimulants. As in the realm of color their tastes ran to vivid reds and greens and blues, barbaric hues that assaulted the eye with a potent stimulation, so in music they were addicted to the drums and trumpets, to shoutings, and wild contortions, to what-

THE PERIODS OF MUSICAL HISTORY

ever gave them a generous measure of sensation, whether in ears or muscles. Their motto in art was doubtless the one which some unknown humorist, perhaps a Frenchman, has attributed to the Germans, in all departments from art to gastronomy—"Plenty of it." They did, to be sure, take a certain satisfaction in the expressiveness of their wailings and shoutings, and even in the crude formal designs into which they shaped them, generally by mere repetition of some easily recognizable formula; but their chief pleasure was to make a good, rousing noise. Of these preliminary stages in the arts of dance and song it is impossible, however, to form any certain ideas. We can only rely upon conjecture and inference, supposing that something like them preceded the stages about which we have more reliable information.

The earliest music of which historic records remain is that of the Greeks. By painstaking study of the musical inscriptions on stone that have survived the centuries, of the instruments actually in existence, or described by ancient Greek writers, and of the technical treatises on music which are preserved, scholars have been able to substantiate a very few meager facts about

the musical practices of the most artistic of nations. On the whole, these facts are singularly disappointing. Forgetting that music is the youngest of the arts, one is apt to expect of the Greeks that wondrous subtlety and maturity in it which they showed in sculpture, architecture, and poetry. A people possessed of so surpassing an artistic instinct, one is apt to think, must have carried its music to a high pitch of perfection. Investigation shows, nevertheless, that the reverse was the case. Indeed, no testimony could speak more eloquently for the deliberation and continuity of the growth of music than the childishness with which it was practiced by a people so gifted as the Greeks with every fineness of nature, but at the disadvantage of living too near the time at which it emerged from savagery.

The Greeks used music chiefly as an adjunct to their poetry, and were accustomed to chant long epics in what would seem to us a monotonous sing-song, generally if not always without accompaniment. Their love for moderation and their avoidance of the passionate, harsh, or over-expressive, moreover, impelled them to exclude from their gamut both the lowest and the highest tones of the voice, so that even their tonal

material was confined to a range of about two octaves. The tones included in this limited range, however, they classified and disposed with the greatest ingenuity. The intervals at which tone should follow tone were dictated by seven arbitrary schemes called modes, and each mode was supposed to have its peculiar quality of expression. Thus the Lydian mode, corresponding to our modern major scale, was considered voluptuous and enfeebling, while the Doric mode, an idea of which may be gained by playing a scale, all on white keys, beginning with E, was thought to breathe manliness, vigor, and dignity. They used no harmony, and introduced rhythm only by the metre of the verses sung. Consequently it is easy to see that they can have had from their music but little æsthetic delight, which depends on the grouping into harmonic or rhythmic forms of the tonal material; but must have valued it chiefly for its sensuous beauty, and for its power to enhance the expressiveness of their poetry.

It is nevertheless noteworthy that all three kinds of value did exist in the music of the Greeks, though the third was still in a rudimentary stage. As a result of the generally equal

length of their verses or lines of poetry, the melody that accompanied them tended to be divided into equal sections remotely resembling our modern "phrases"; and these sections tended to balance each other, and so to give the sense of symmetrical form. Furthermore, it was customary to end each line with a fall of the voice analogous to the downward inflection of a speaking voice at the end of a sentence. These downward inflections, called cadences, from a Latin verb meaning "to fall," afforded a convenient means of dividing off the musical as well as the poetic flow into definite parts like segments in a piece of bamboo or the inches on a tape-line; and in the subsequent development of musical structure these divisions, marked by cadences, became the indispensable elements in a highly complex organism. Thus the Greeks, in spite of the immaturity of their music, considered in and for itself, did actually make valuable contributions to the progress of the art. Their period was one of promise rather than of fruition; but it contained the seeds of further growth. It is often called the Monophonic or "one-voiced" period, from the fact that their chants were purely melodic, em-

ploying but one voice at a time, without harmonic support.

With the simultaneous employment of more than one voice, music passed out of its infancy. The Polyphonic period, so called from Greek words signifying "many-voiced," extended, through all the Middle Ages, up to so recent a date as the end of the sixteenth century, there to culminate in the remarkable compositions of Palestrina. In duration it was the longest of all the periods; but this is not surprising when we consider, in the first place, the almost insuperable difficulties to be overcome before even two voices could be pleasantly and fluently conducted together; in the second place, the absence of all prototypes or models for the first experimenters to work from; and, above all, the surprising distance that separates Palestrina's ingenious, intricate, and beautiful tone-fabrics, written sometimes in as many as sixteen parts, from the rude and protoplasmic chants of two voices, singing an interval of a "fifth" apart, from which they were developed.

That type of chant in which two voices, one a fifth higher than the other, sang the same melody, primitive as it was, and intolerable to mod-

ern ears, was to its originators a convenient and pleasant device. It was convenient because, the natural range of soprano and tenor voices being about a fifth above that of contraltos and basses, choirs could chant at this interval more naturally than at the octave. It was pleasant because, while it left each of the two melodies distinctly audible, it produced by their combination a harmonic richness that must have fallen on mediæval ears with an unwonted splendor. Organum, as this device of singing in fifths was called, must be ever memorable in the history of music as the beginning of harmony.

After musicians had once taken the plunge, and dared to make different melodies sound simultaneously, it took them but a comparatively short time (though eras in music, as in geology, are long) to combine the parts in other intervals than the fifth, to use varying intervals in successive chords, to add more voices, and in general to elaborate in every way their tissue of tones. Adopting, with some modifications, the Greek modes as the prescribed orbits of the individual melodies, they produced effects of harmony necessarily very unlike our modern ones, which are built upon the major and minor

THE PERIODS OF MUSICAL HISTORY

scales, but nevertheless novel and in their way extremely beautiful. The fabric of the mediæval ecclesiastical music was made up of a succession of shifting chords, each very pure and sweet in itself, yet without those definite connections with its fellows that modern habits of thought demand. The whole effect was curiously kaleidoscopic, mysterious, and vague. Unity depended, not on the piece being in any one key, which it never was, but on the melodies being coherent and expressive. These were the salient features, the harmony was ancillary and incidental. One voice after another came out from the filmy background, sounded for a moment above the rest, and subsided again, to be replaced by another. Not only was there no attempt at a definite series of even sections, built up into recognizable rhythms, such as are indispensable to modern music, but any such effect was studiously avoided. The effort was rather to make the voices interweave inextricably and untraceably. The entire mass was in constant flux and change, a body of lovely and expressive sound, without a single distinct lineament, or any conceivable whence or whither. In Palestrina we have the style at its acme, vague, iri-

descent, beautiful with a mystical and unearthly beauty. Beyond the point it reached with him, pure polyphonic music, without rhythmic or harmonic definition, could not go. Another critical point was reached, another transformation was imminent.

By the beginning of the seventeenth century, moreover, there began to dawn upon men's minds various new principles of musical construction which were pregnant with possibilities for a far wider and more vital development than any that had gone before. The rapidity with which the art now began to grow, ramify, and mature, the variety of the new tendencies, and the multiplicity of different styles or orders of art, such as opera and oratorio, fugue and sonata, toward which they led, are surprising. In the countless centuries before Palestrina music grew slowly and uniformly, like a plant; in the short three hundred years between the birth of Palestrina in 1528 and the death of Beethoven in 1827, it had its inconceivably rich and various blossoming, and Monteverde and Gluck, Corelli and Scarlatti, Couperin and Rameau, Bach and Handel, Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, were the bright flowers it now put forth.

Such a rapid and many-sided advance is fairly bewildering ; but it is nevertheless possible to distinguish in the movement a few salient and dominant features, more significant and remarkable than all the others. From our present point of view, the labors of J. S. Bach in the fugue and suite forms, and of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven in the sonata form, are of supreme interest. These labors were guided and fructified by several new principles of musical effect.*

The first step toward new fields was taken early in the seventeenth century by a set of daring reformers in Florence, who, boldly discarding the perfect polyphonic style of Palestrina, contrived a style of dramatic music, embodied in small operas, in which single voices sing more or less expressive melodies over an instrumental accompaniment in chords. Crude in the extreme as were necessarily the compositions of Cavalier, Caccini, Peri, and their fellows, they opened up novel paths, because they had to rely for their effectiveness largely on the conduct of the harmonies employed. So long as the old church

* These principles will be studied more in detail in the chapter on The Principles of Pure Music.

modes were adhered to, to be sure, the harmonic style remained necessarily vague, wandering, and monotonous ; but gradually the composers began to see that, by altering their intervals, they could introduce variety and contrast into their cadences, making one line end on one chord, and the next on a different though related one, and that thus they could make coherent the successive phrases, punctuated by the cadences, and at the same time set them in an opposition that made for variety. In the interests of definiteness of cadence and an obvious distribution of contrasted yet complementary chords, therefore, the modes were slowly transformed into the modern scale, and music became at last harmonically definite and firm. All the tones came to be conceived as grouped around certain tonal centres, which could be manipulated and organized like the masses in a picture. Thus emerged the principle of tonality or key, and in the course of time the device of modulation by which one passes from one key to another. Still it remained difficult to get far away from the key in which one started out, because of the manner of tuning, which made only a few keys available at once ; but J. S. Bach, modifying the system of

THE PERIODS OF MUSICAL HISTORY

tuning to what is called equal temperament,* which opens the doors simultaneously to the entire twelve keys, emancipated music entirely from the restrictions of the ecclesiastical modes, and in his great work, "The Well- [or Equally-] Tempered Clavichord," demonstrated practically the use of all the twelve keys as an intimate and compact family. By his time the principle of tonality was firmly established.

A second principle vital to modern music is that of "thematic development." By this is meant, first, the existence in the music of certain salient, easily recognizable groups of tones, called motifs, subjects, or themes, which are presented to the hearer at the outset, and impressed upon him by their unique individuality of cut ; and second, that subsequent elaboration of these themes, in varied but still recognizable forms, which corresponds closely with the process by which an essayist develops an idea, a mathematician proves a theorem, or a preacher elucidates a text. It is interesting to note that the German word "Satz," often used by musicians to mean "a theme," signifies primarily a thesis or prop-

* For a technical explanation of equal temperament, see Dr. Parry's "Evolution of the Art of Music," pp. 187-188.

osition in logic, while "Durchführung," used to describe the development of the theme, means primarily a leading-through or bringing to an issue. Thus the process of thematic development in music is much like any other process of intellectual statement and proof. Now it is evident that this process, which is indispensable to all the higher intellectual forms of music, requires in the first place definite, concise, and memorable themes, since it is impossible to discuss what one fails to grasp, or after grasping, forgets. As the proverb says, the preparer of a ragout of hare must "first catch his hare." Similarly musicians, before they could make their music logical, had to catch their themes. But as musical material up to the time of Palestrina never was definite or memorable, the first requisite of thematic music was some principle by which themes could be defined. This principle was found in the time-measurement of tones. So soon as a group of tones were placed in measured relations of duration to one another, an individual theme emerged, and could be elaborated. The second great conquest of modern music, then, was the conquest of the definite theme or motif, strictly measured in time, and of those de-

THE PERIODS OF MUSICAL HISTORY

vices by which it could be developed in an extended and logical discourse.

The third notable achievement of seventeenth century composers was the emancipation of music from servitude to poetry, and the establishment of it as an independent art. In one sense this was but a natural outcome of its new qualities of harmonic and thematic definition, lacking which it could never reach independence. So long as it remained in itself vague, amorphous, inchoate, it was constrained to be but a hand-maid, to content itself with lending eloquence or atmosphere to the utterances of its sister art; but this condition of dependence, however inevitable for a time, was nevertheless unfortunate, and bound to be eventually outlived. Music is always fatally handicapped by association with words. In the first place, words impose upon it a concrete meaning immeasurably more trite, prosaic, and limited than that abstract and indefinable meaning to the heart and mind which is its proper prerogative; the expressive power of music really begins where that of poetry fails and ceases. In the second place, the limitations of all vocal music are in many ways serious. Not only are voices incapable of sounding readily and

with certainty many intervals, but they are confined to a range of a little over three octaves, and to phrases short enough not to overtax the breath. Instruments are free from all these disqualifications. They produce pure tones, without words, the most celestial of artistic materials ; they can sound any interval ; they extend over a range of more than seven octaves, from the deep bass of the organ or contrabass to the shrill and immaterial treble of the piccolo ; and the breadth of the phrases they can produce is limited not by their own mechanism, but only by the power of intellectual synthesis possessed by listeners. For all these reasons, instruments are the ideal media for producing music ; and never until they supplanted voices could music reach its complete stature as a mature and self-sufficient art, leaning on no crutch, borrowing no *raison d'être*, but making by its own legitimate means its own unique effects.

The task of seventeenth century musicians was, then, in large part, the establishment of tonality and the hierarchy of keys, contrasted with one another, but accessible by modulation ; the crystallization, by means of both harmonic and metrical definition, of individual themes out of the

amorphous tonal matrix of previous eras, and the exploration of means for building up these themes into coherent organisms ; and lastly the emancipation of the art thus brought into full life from the tyranny of association with words and voices. This was an immense task ; and it is not to be wondered at that most of the men engaged in it never attained mastery enough to give them great personal prominence. Theirs was a time of beginnings, of preparation for novel and unprecedented achievements. The early opera-writers, the Italian violinists, the German organists, and the clavichord and harpsichord writers of that period, men like Cavaliere and Caccini, Corelli and Scarlatti, Sweelinck and Frescobaldi, Purcell, Kuhnau, and Couperin, are chiefly known to us as preparers of the soil, and sowers of the seed, for a harvest which was gathered by later, and probably greater, though not more honorable men. The first composer after Palestrina who like him overtopped all his fellows, and brought to its culmination another great period, was Johann Sebastian Bach.

In Bach's style we find, in addition to the polyphonic or many-voiced texture of Palestrina, a thematic pointedness and logic and a har-

monic structure which are entirely unforeseen in the older man. The fugue, a form which he carried to its highest pitch, and which was admirably suited to his genius, is in certain respects allied to the earlier style, though in others wholly modern. Like the ecclesiastical forms of Palestrina, it is of the basket-work type of texture. One voice begins alone, others enter in succession, and all wind in and out amongst one another almost as intricately as in a sixteenth century madrigal. On the other hand, the fugue as a whole begins and ends in some one key, and throughout its progress modulates from key to key with well-planned contrasts and firmly-controlled movement. Moreover, a single definite theme or subject appears at the outset of the piece, and stands prominently forth through its whole extent; it is announced by the first voice, repeated at a different pitch in the answer of the second, reiterated again by the third and fourth, and subsequently made the basis of an ingenious, varied, and extended development. Finally, although some of Bach's fugues are vocal, most of them are written either for organ or for clavichord. In all these respects his work is modern, and perhaps most of all is it modern

in its inexorable logic, its subtlety and variety, and in its poignant, deeply emotional expressiveness, which is always held within the bounds necessary to supreme architectural beauty. The period of Bach and his precursors, sometimes called the "polyphonic-harmonic" period, because in it the modern harmonic system was grafted upon the polyphony of Palestrina, remains to-day, from some points of view, the purest and noblest period of musical history.

All the time that Bach, in the privacy of an obscure German town, was writing his wonderfully intricate and beautiful polyphonic music, the world about him, oblivious, was seeking out a quite different type of art. It is a surprising fact that Bach's compositions were virtually unknown for fifty years after his death, and might have remained so permanently had they not been "discovered" by appreciative students, much as the receptacles of classical lore were discovered in the Renaissance after the long darkness of the Middle Ages, and made the basis of an intellectual revival. Bach's great works, too, were full of an undying vitality; but for a long time their potency had to remain latent, because men were occupied with another order of art, a different set of

problems, an alien style. Ever since the Florentine revolution, when the polyphonic texture of mediæval music was abandoned for a simple monodic or one-voiced style, in which a melody is accompanied by a series of chords, much of the musical genius of the world had been devoted to the development of eloquent single melodies, and of suitable harmonic backgrounds for them. With the systematization of harmony and the establishment of definite themes this type of art became mature. Composers discerned the possibility of building up whole movements to which interest could be given by the statement and development of one or more themes, contrasted both in character and in key. They saw that the whole could be unified by general qualities of style, by recurrence of the themes, and, above all, by being made to embody, in the long run, a single tonality, though with momentary departures from it for the sake of variety. Working out their idea, they devised a type of structure which has remained up to this day the highest and most widely useful of all musical forms. The essential features of "sonata-form," as it is called, are, in the first place, the Exposition of two themes or subjects of discourse, contrasting both

THE PERIODS OF MUSICAL HISTORY

in character and in key ; in the second place, the Development of these themes, the exploitation of their latent possibilities ; in the third place, Restatement of them, in the central key of the movement, bringing all to a point, and completing the cycle of Statement, Argument, and Summary. Sonata-form, of which it is easy to see the naturalness and beauty, depends for its unity, not on the equal interplay of many voices, like the older polyphonic forms, but on the saliency, cumulative development, and harmonic interrelations, of single themes. We may, therefore, call the great period of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, the period in which the sonata-form attained its full maturity, the "harmonic period," or, in view of the complete round or circuit of themes its forms exemplified, the "cyclical-form period." It culminated in the early years of the nineteenth century, in the grand works of Beethoven's maturity.

After Beethoven, music began to ramify in so many directions that it is impossible to classify its phases in a hard-and-fast series. It had its romanticists, Schubert, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Chopin, who uttered with freer passion and poetry the emotional and spiritual

meanings already heard in Beethoven. It had its realists, notably Berlioz and Liszt, who, attempting to divert it into the realm of pictorial delineation and description, have been followed by all the horde of contemporary writers of programme-music. It had its nationalists, men like Glinka, Smetana, and in our own day, Grieg and Dvořák, who sought to impress upon its speech a local accent. Above all, it had one great master, Brahms, who, assimilating the polyphony of Bach, the architectonic structure of Beethoven, and the romantic ardor of Schumann, added to them all his own austere beauty and profound feeling. But we are too near these later masters to get any general, justly-proportioned view of them. It is on the horizon only that mountains cease to be solitary peaks, and become ranges, the trend and disposition of which can be accurately plotted on the maps. The general tendency of musical evolution, down to Beethoven so clearly traceable, so obviously continuous, becomes after him bafflingly complex.

Fortunately, this complexity need not embarrass our present undertaking. We have seen how, in the gradual and laborious, but incessant

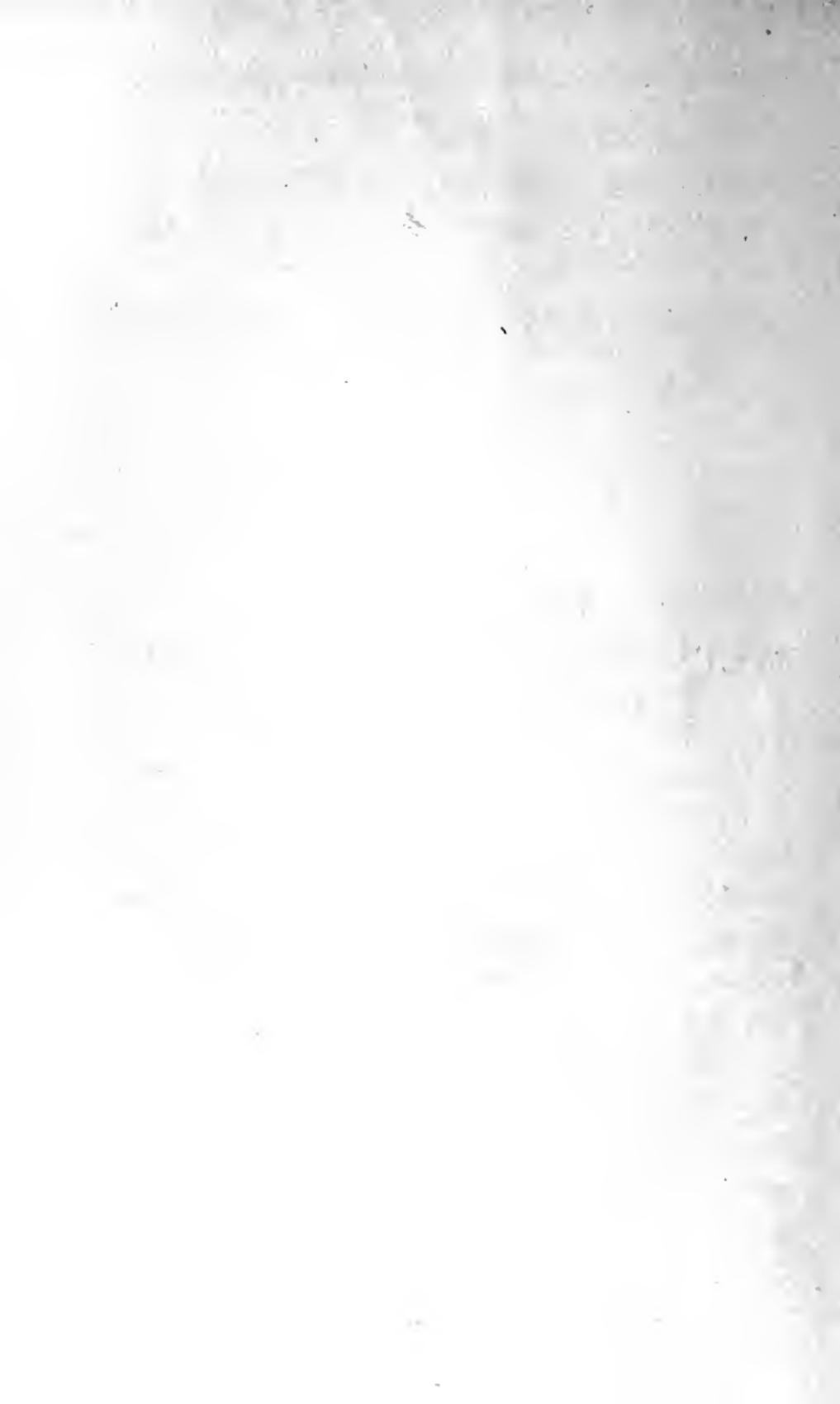
and inevitable growth of musical art, period succeeded period as the artistic faculty of man constantly discerned new possibilities of beauty, sensuous, expressive, and æsthetic, in the tonal material with which it dealt. We have seen how this evolution tended always from the indefinite, incoherent, and homogeneous toward the definite, coherent, and heterogeneous ; and how it tended to embody ever higher and higher values, beginning with the mere sense-stimulations of savages and leading up to the highly complex and intellectual sound-fabric of Beethoven, in which the sensuous and emotional values are held ever subordinate to the æsthetic. We have examined, briefly and summarily, the special characteristics of the successive periods into which the great evolution has been divided by those critical points which the nature of its material determined. With the general view of musical history thus gained held clearly in mind, we may now profitably pass to that more detailed study of the great period of Beethoven, the golden age of pure music, which is the especial task before us.

It will be necessary, however, to linger still a little longer on the threshold, in order to ex-

BEETHOVEN AND HIS FORERUNNERS

amine in more detail yet the two scarcely less interesting periods which preceded it,—the periods of Palestrina and Bach,—and to define yet more precisely those fundamental principles of pure music on the efficacy of which its glory depended.

CHAPTER II
PALESTRINA AND THE MUSIC
OF MYSTICISM



CHAPTER II

PALESTRINA AND THE MUSIC OF MYSTICISM



I T has been often pointed out by historians and critics that in their early stages the arts of architecture, sculpture, and painting were the servants of religion. Nursed through their infancy by the cherishing hand of the church, they emerged into the secular world only with their comparative maturity. Architecture, which in our day and country embodies itself chiefly in great civic and mercantile buildings, began with the temples of the pagan Greeks and the cathedrals of the mediæval Christians. Sculpture for the most part delineated, in antiquity, Egyptian or Greek gods and goddesses ; and in the middle ages, Christian saints. Even painting, which at the

Renaissance became for all time a secular art, inspired by its own ideals and controlled only by intrinsic conditions, commenced by picturing on mediæval altar-pieces and frescoes the heroes of sacred story, with their up-turned eyes and their clasped hands, and by symbolizing the dogmas or illustrating the narratives of its task-master, religion. J. A. Symonds, in the third part of his "Renaissance in Italy," in which he describes at length this universal dependence of art, in its early stages, on the church, offers the following plausible explanation of it: "Art aims at expressing an ideal; and this ideal is the transfiguration of human elements into something nobler, felt and apprehended by the imagination. Such an ideal, such an all-embracing glorification of humanity, exists for simple and unsophisticated societies only in the forms of religion."* It is not, indeed, until art, nurtured in cloisters, acquires definite aims, technical methods, and self-confidence, that it can put off its dependence on ecclesiastical aid, at first favorable but eventually restrictive, and essay a free life.

* "Renaissance in Italy." Part III. The Fine Arts, p. 6.

To this general rule music is no exception—mediæval music was the child, nursling, and handmaid of the Church. It is true that there did grow up, in the lyrical songs of troubadours and minstrels, a kind of popular music that had in many respects more vitality, individuality, and beauty than the more conventional ecclesiastical art; and that the latter, at many stages in its development, had to draw fresh inspiration from the humble popular minstrels. But in the middle ages, when the common people were entirely illiterate, and all intellectual concerns were in the hands of priests, who alone could read, write, and preserve manuscripts and artistic traditions, it was inevitable that the only recognized music, stamped with the seal of age and authority, should be that of the ecclesiastical choristers. The student of the infancy of music has to direct his attention, not to the mediæval world at large, but to the cathedrals and the monasteries of that intensely clerical age.

For the modern mind, permeated as it is with the instincts of liberty and individualism, and perhaps especially for the American mind, naturally radical and irreverent, it is difficult to conceive the degree in which all the rites, customs,

and beliefs of the mediæval Catholic Church were matters of traditional authority. There was not a word of the liturgy, not a tone of the plain chant to which it was sung, not a gesture of the priest nor a genuflexion of the worshippers, that was not prescribed by what was considered supreme dictation and hallowed by immemorial practice.* The liturgy, or text of the Mass, the skeleton and fixed basis, so to speak, of the ritual as a whole, began to take shape in the hands of the apostles themselves ; was developed by a gradual accretion of prayers, hymns, responses, and readings from Scripture ; was translated into Latin and adopted by the Roman Church ; and became fixed in practically its present form so early as the end of the sixth century. When we consider the almost superstitious regard in which its great antiquity caused it to be held, and when we reflect that the musical setting used with it was considered a mere appanage to the sacred words, we can understand the slow development of music in the first eleven centuries

* See, for a complete description of the Church ritual, Mr. Edward Dickinson's "History of Music in the Western Church," Chapters III and IV.

of the Christian era. In taking its first steps music was not merely hampered by its own uncertainty and infantile feebleness; it was paralyzed by servile dependence on a text swathed within the bandages of priestly convention.

The only form of music used in the Church, up to the beginning of the twelfth century, the only form of music ever given its official sanction, was the Gregorian chant or plain song, which consists in a single unaccompanied series of tones set to the liturgic text, intoned by priest or choristers, and for many centuries used exclusively throughout the entire service. It has not only no harmony, but, properly speaking, no meter or rhythm, being dependent for time-measurement on the prose text it accompanies. "It follows" says Mr. Dickinson,* "the phrasing, the emphasis, and the natural inflections of the voice in reciting the text, at the same time that it idealizes them. It is a sort of heightened form of speech, a musical declamation, having for its object the intensifying of the emotional powers of ordinary spoken language. It stands to true song or tune in much

*Op. cit., p. 96.

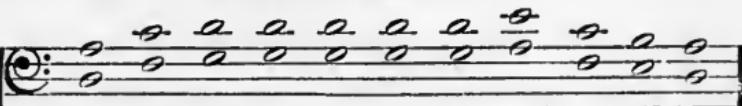
the same relation as prose to verse, less impassioned, more reflective, yet capable of moving the heart like eloquence." Having neither harmonic nor metrical relationship, it had, of course, no proper structure of its own; and so long as it was used in this primary way, sung in unison or even in two parts at the interval of an octave, there was little about it that could properly be called musical at all.

But after a while it occurred to some one to let a second set of voices sing the same chant at an interval of a fifth above the first.* This scheme, which, simple as it was, contained the seeds of wonderful developments, was probably first recommended by several practical advantages. When the chant was sung by two choirs, one made up of the high voices (soprano and tenors) and the other of the low voices (contraltos and basses) the interval of the octave was practically inconvenient because the low voices could not use their highest tones without throwing the high voices out of range, and the high voices could not use their lowest tones without similarly embarrassing the low ones. When the interval of the fifth was used, on the contrary,

* See Chapter I, p. 25.

practically all the tones in both ranges, which are by nature about a fifth apart, * became available. This was a very practical argument in favor of chanting "at the fifth." An even stronger one was the fact that, while fifths, like octaves, are harmonious and pleasant to the ear, without harshness or discordance, they are richer than octaves, and their constituents stand out distinct instead of merging into one impression, as do tones an octave apart; so that the practice of Organum, or chanting at the fifth, was harmonically sweet and full as well as melodically interesting. Organum came therefore into general and wide use in the mediæval church. Hucbald, a monkish writer of the tenth century, gives the following example of a fragment of plain chant "organized," or sung by two voices a fifth apart:

EXAMPLE OF ORGANUM.

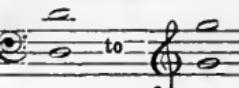
Fig. II. 

In pa - tris sem - pi - tur - nus es fi - li - us.

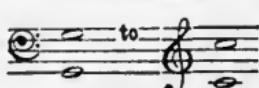
The practice of Organum, crude as it may

RANGE OF SOPRANOS
AND TENORS.

RANGE OF CONTRALTOS
AND BASSES.

* Figure I. 

(D to G.)



(G to C.)

(A fifth lower.)

seem to modern ears, was of immense historical importance, as the first embodiment of that principle of combining various parts simultaneously which in due time produced all the resources of polyphony and of harmony. It is not necessary to examine here, in detail, all the stages of that long and weary journey which the mediæval composers made from this starting-point of Organum to the highly developed contrapuntal music of the sixteenth century. In all its aspects it was essentially a growth in definiteness, coherence, and heterogeneity. The parts were combined with more and more freedom, both as to their comparative rate of movement and as to the purity of the chords they made at prominent points (less harmonious intervals being gradually tolerated); the number of parts was increased, in spite of the great difficulties that each additional part must have meant to writers with inadequate experience and models; experiments were tried in combining together tunes already composed, popular songs and the like, trimming and twisting and compressing or expanding them to make them fit; the device of imitation, of which more will be said presently, was introduced in the interests of sense and

coherence;* one experiment after another was tried, one resource after another was utilized, until eventually, in the sixteenth century, the art of ecclesiastical counterpoint † was fully established.

To this sixteenth-century music it is difficult for modern ears to listen appreciatively. The exact value and significance of chords, cadences, and melodic phrases, like the exact significance of words in language, depends so largely upon current usage and the mental habits it reposes upon, that it is as much an effort for modern listeners to comprehend mediæval music as it is for the modern reader to understand the vocabulary of Chaucer or Shakespeare. Just as words, in the course of long service, gradually take on new associations, new shades of suggestion, and even, in extreme cases, a significance quite opposite to their original one, so the material of music, as used to-day, has hundreds of associations and subtle shades of value,

*See page 61.

† The word counterpoint, from the Latin “punctus contra punctum,” meaning note (or point) against note, describes that mode of writing in which various melodies progress simultaneously, or one against another.

developed only during the last three hundred years, but nevertheless permeating our minds so thoroughly that it is almost impossible for us to think them away.

Perhaps the most inveterate of these modern habits of musical thought is the harmonic habit. It is second nature for us to conduct all our musical thinking in terms of harmonic relations. We think of chords as related to one another in certain fixed ways, as forming groups or clusters just as definite as the groups of atoms in a chemical molecule. It is not more sure, for example, that in a molecule of water two atoms of hydrogen are engaged or held in combination by one atom of oxygen, than it is that in any key the dominant and subdominant chords are held in the position of subordinate companions by the tonic chord, and that the other chords of the key are held in more remote but still perfectly fixed relations with this Paterfamilias of the harmonic family. We think of the chords in a phrase, of whatever length and complexity, as progressing in a coherent series, as intertwined one with another by manifold relationships, and as embodying, all together, some one key. For us, every composition is in some particular key as inevit-

ably as every poem or essay is in some particular language. We modulate freely, to be sure, from key to key ; but this rather intensifies than obliterates our sense of key, just as the process of translating from one language to another intensifies our sense of the peculiar idioms of each. Our whole manner of thought would be as indescribably shocked by a passage which placed together, cheek by jowl, chords belonging to different keys, as by a sentence every word of which was drawn from a different tongue.

Now this habit of thought simply did not exist in Palestrina and his contemporaries and fore-runners ; it had not been evolved. The bit of Organum given in Figure II is hideous to modern ears just because it violates at every step our harmonic sense ; it was pleasant to its composer, whoever he was, because he had no harmonic sense to be violated. To us, the sound of a tone with its fifth suggests immediately and inexorably the whole “triad” founded on that tone—root, third, fifth, and octave—and the key we consider it to be in. The sound of the tone and its fifth summons up in our imagination the whole chord and its key just as automatically as the sight of a horse’s head arouses in us an image of the trunk,

legs, and tail that accompany it. This being the case, the bit of Organum quoted means for us a series of abrupt transitions from key to key, without warning, reason, or coherence. It is musical nonsense, gibberish, delirium. To its composer, on the contrary, it was merely an agreeable combination of two pleasing melodies in a harmonious interval. The chords used had for him no implications, no necessary relations, the observance of which made sense, the violation nonsense. They were pleasant combinations of sounds formed by the melodies in their progress ; and that was all. Even more striking becomes the contrast between mediæval and modern usage in the more mature music of the later contrapuntal epoch. Palestrina, for example, begins a *Stabat Mater* as follows :

Fig. III.



Here the first three chords, a modern musician would say, are in as many keys. The first is the

triad of A-major, the second that of G-major, and the third that of F-major. The coherence of the passage depends, in fact, entirely on the melodies; the chords they form have no harmonic cohesiveness. For the old composers, in whose scores hundreds of such passages may be found, harmony was still a sensuous, not an intellectual or æsthetic agent.

Another peculiarity of their harmonic style resulted from their attitude toward dissonances, or chords containing harsh intervals. Dissonance, as we shall have frequent occasion to see, plays an important part in modern music, both as an indispensable element in design and as a means of peculiar emotional expressiveness. In the sixteenth century, on the contrary, dissonances were admitted in the harmonic fabric but sparingly, and when admitted were subject to stringent rules, the purpose of which was to mollify their harshness. The result was not only still further to preclude the sense of harmonic sequence and coherence so essential to modern ears, and produced largely by the skilful use of dissonance merging into consonance, but also to limit the expressive powers of music to that range of feeling which is aroused by the purest, clear-

est, and most mellifluous chords sounding continuously, without contrast or relief.

But if the music of the sixteenth century was lacking in harmonic cogency and intensity, it was not for that reason either incoherent or inexpressive. It had its own sort of coherence, its own type of eloquence, both depending on melodic rather than on harmonic qualities. Music was to Palestrina and his fellows entirely a matter of melody, not of harmony at all. The reader needs only to glance again at Figure III, attending not to the chords and their sequence, but to the individual voices, one after another, to see that in their own way the phrases hang together firmly, and say efficiently what they mean. Each of the four voices has an intelligible and expressive part, and if together they sound a little strange, singly they are eminently good. The more one studies this old music the more one realizes that it is all melody ; from beginning to end, from top to bottom, the mediæval scores *sing*. They are not, like many modern works, full of inert, lifeless matter, tones put in to fill out the harmonies, and having no melodic excuse for being. In the modern monophonic style, in which but one melody sings, the remaining parts are almost inevit-

ably treated by the composer as affording rather a logical sequence of harmonies than a subsidiary tissue of melodic strands. In the sixteenth century, on the other hand, harmony was the accident, melody the essence; any chord would do very well in any place, provided it were consonant enough not to offend the ear; but every tone must have a melodic reason for being; it must be a point in a line; all the lines must be conducted with draughtsmanlike deftness and economy. Melodic life is accordingly the supreme trait of the style well named polyphonic.

And yet, here we encounter still another difficulty introduced by modern habits of thought. To us nowadays melody means, not merely a series of tones having that sort of elementary consecutiveness which we find in Palestrina, for example, but a series of tones divided up into several definite segments which in some way balance, complement, and complete one another. The first phrase of "Yankee Doodle" has "elementary consecutiveness," but it does not satisfy our melodic sense. We must add the second phrase, equal to it in length, which echoes and reënforces it, and the third phrase, twice as long as either, which rounds out the whole tune to a complete

period. In short, just as harmony involves for us chord structure and interrelation, melody involves for us metrical balance, response, symmetry—that recognizable recurrence, to use the most general term possible, which we call “rhythm.” Mere eloquent intoning, without repetition and balance of phrases, is to us no more “tune” than prose is verse. Here again we are in danger of letting our own habits of thought confuse our understanding of an unfamiliar type of art. The truth is, Palestrina does not write “tunes,” in the modern sense of the word. He lived and wrote before musical evolution had given the world that principle of metrical structure so essential to modern music; and his style, therefore, lacks definite meter, lacks all rhythm save that vague one superposed upon it by his Latin prose text. His music, devoid of any regular segmental division, is indeed a sort of tonal prose, as massive and majestic as the “Religio Medici.”

One other technical peculiarity of the music of the polyphonic period deserves notice here, as it involved a principle destined to assume great importance in later stages of art. The polyphonic writers often introduced successive voices

with an identical formula of notes, which by repetition came to have somewhat the virtue of a motif or subject in giving to the music rationality and sequence. They had not as yet, to be sure, enough experience in composing definite themes strictly measured in time to make these embryonic motifs either very long or very distinct, but they did make and utilize subjects striking enough to be remembered and recognized. In this way they introduced the important device of "Imitation." This imitating of one part by another, even when crudely carried out, gave a certain air of intention and forethought to what without it would have been a haphazard utterance of tones, and in later times, when developed to a high pitch of perfection in the fugue and allied forms, became a powerful agent for securing intelligibility. Meanwhile, as we have seen, the intelligibility of the sixteenth-century music depended chiefly on the fine melodic cogency and expressiveness of its individual voice parts. Although time-measurement was well understood, melody was without metrical structure and rhythmic organization. Harmony was the art of making pleasant sounds by bringing the voices together, at prominent moments,

on consonant chords ; it took no heed of chord relation, of tonality, or of orderly modulation ; and it used dissonance with extreme conservatism. Such, in sum, were the most notable technical peculiarities of that polyphonic period which Palestrina brought to its culmination.

Giovanni Pierluigi Sante da Palestrina, named Palestrina from the place of his birth, which was a small town in the Campagna not far from Rome, was born of humble parents about the year 1524. About 1550 he went to Rome as teacher of the boy-singers in the Capella Giulia of the Vatican. All the rest of his life was spent in Rome, in various posts in the service of the church, and in studious and uneventful labor at his great compositions. Although a married man, he was made in 1554 one of the singers in the Papal choir by Pope Julius III, to whom he had dedicated a set of masses ; on the accession of Pope Paul IV a year later he was dismissed, and became ill with anxiety as to the support of his growing family ; he was nevertheless almost immediately appointed music-director of the Lateran Church, and later he held successively the posts of music-director in the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore, "Composer to the Pontifical Choir,"

leader of the choir of St. Peter's, and music-director to Cardinal Aldobrandini. Aside from these meagre and arid details, unfortunately, little is known of the man Palestrina. His private life is almost a blank. The one story oftenest told of him, that his Mass of Pope Marcellus, produced in 1565, was written to convince the reforming Council of Trent of the possibility of purging church music of the trivialities and abuses which had crept into it, has been discredited by recent historians. Mythical also seems to be the story of Palestrina's one great popular triumph, in 1575, a year of jubilee, when fifteen hundred residents of the composer's native town are said to have entered Rome in three companies, singing his works, and led by himself. The story is a severe tax on the credulity of anyone whose ideas of chorus-singing are based on modern methods.

In character Palestrina was devout, pious, frugal, and industrious. Though so few records exist, we can guess his industry from the mass of the work he achieved, and his honor and sense of responsibility from his anxiety when the support of his family seemed in danger. As to his piety, all his music is one eloquent demon-

stration of it. Nor is it without verbal testimony in the dedications and inscriptions on his manuscripts. In dedicating his first book of motets to Cardinal d'Este he expressed his artistic convictions as follows : " Music exerts a great influence on the minds of mankind, and is intended not only to cheer these, but also to guide and control them, a statement which has not only been made by the ancients, but which is found equally true to-day. The sharper blame, therefore, do those deserve who misemploy so great and splendid a gift of God in light or unworthy things, and thereby excite men, who of themselves are inclined to all evil, to sin and misdoing. As regards myself, I have from youth been affrighted at such misuse, and anxiously have I avoided giving forth anything which could lead anyone to become more wicked or godless. All the more should I, now that I have attained to riper years, and am not far removed from old age, place my entire thoughts on lofty, earnest things, such as are worthy of a Christian." When, in 1594, Palestrina died, almost his last words, whispered to his son Igino, directed the publication of his latest manuscript works, " to the glory of the most high God, and the worship of His holy temple."

A sentence in the dedication by Palestrina just cited affords us as serviceable a key as we could desire to the fundamental temper or mood of mind which underlay the type of art he represents. The technical peculiarities of this art already traced in the foregoing pages, do not in themselves explain it; they are, indeed, but manifestations of a deeper spirit underneath, a spirit that was as characteristic of the mediaeval mind as idealism is of the modern mind. Incommensurate as were the technical resources of the mediæval composer with ours, their whole mental temper and outlook upon life was in even more striking contrast with the modern attitude. We have, therefore, next to ask: What was the most characteristic peculiarity of this age? What was its most pervasive general trait? What was the one dominant quality in which most of Palestrina's contemporaries, for all their minor differences, were alike?

Palestrina himself suggests the answer to such questions. "The sharper blame, therefore," he writes, "do those deserve who misemploy so great and splendid a gift of God in light or unworthy things, and thereby excite men, who of themselves are inclined to all evil, to sin and misdoing." This setting in antithesis of "men,

who of themselves are inclined to all evil," with the attribution of a "great and splendid gift" to a God conceived as remote from men though benevolent to them, exemplifies the essence of that mediæval view of life which we wish to understand, and for which perhaps the best single name is mysticism. The mystic begins his philosophy with a sharp sundering of himself, considered as an individual existing in time and space, with earthly body, finite mind, and human passions, from what he considers supreme, formless, and eternal good. In common with other men, he has his instinctive perceptions of the divine ; but unlike other men he cuts off very sharply the divine thus perceived from the real world in which he eats and drinks, works and plays, lives and dies. His is a world of strong contrasts, of extreme antithesis—the world that mystical terminology divides into "apparent and real," "divine and carnal," "temporal and eternal." His intuition of what is beyond the veil of mortality, absolute, permanent, serves only to emphasize more poignantly his own frailty, partiality, and transience. He not only hypostatizes his own ideal, his dream and aspiration of what ought to be, making of it, as all men do, a real objective ex-

istence, but he then cuts it off from himself, makes it a touchstone of all the dross that in him exists alongside the pure gold, and while he attributes all virtue to this "other" or "beyond" projected by his unconscious imagination, reserves to his present actual self, as directly known, all wickedness, sin, and failure. God is perfect, but remote; man is near—and base.

This was the characteristic attitude of religious-minded men in the middle ages. If to us it may seem pathetically childish and superstitious, we should not judge it without remembering the epoch of which it was a part. When we reconstruct in imagination that historic moment, that peculiar inheritance and environment of the sixteenth century Europeans, it is hard to conceive how else they could have interpreted the world. Theirs was an age, we must remind ourselves, of violence and bloodshed, of greed, hypocrisy, lust, and faithlessness. Craft and cruelty reigned in places of power, and the minds of the common people groped in the obscurity of gross ignorance, made even darker by fitful flashes of superstition. The poor were ground down by tyrannies and oppressions, the power-

ful were tormented by constant dread of treachery and assassination. Plagues and pestilence, war and famine and drought, made physical existence miserable ; priestly bigotry and dogmatism crushed all mental initiative. It is not surprising that humanity, in the midst of such conditions, failed to recognize, as the source of its beliefs, its own latent virtue ; the wonder is rather that it succeeded in rising at all to the intuition of a holiness which, by a natural error, it conceived as entirely severed from itself. It was much to arrive at this point. The object of the present analysis is not to discredit the mediæval conception of the world, but, by pointing out its peculiarities, to throw light on the music which was one of its profoundest utterances.

The most familiar, and in some respects the most characteristic, element of mysticism is its ecstatic, devout attitude towards the deity or Absolute it worships. The mystic throws himself on the ground before his God, so to speak, in an ecstasy of complete self-abandonment and surrender. He is utterly prone, passive, will-less. His worship is the most complete, the most devoted worship of which there is record. The

Greek pagans might sacrifice a lamb or an ox at the altars of their gods, the mystic sacrifices nothing less than himself, his very personality. He desires no reciprocal relations with his deity, makes no reservations in his commerce with it, retains no claim to independence, seeks no special favors; what he longs for, whole-heartedly and with a passionate fervor, is complete absorption, utter annihilation. In the trances of the devotees, consciousness dwindles to a point, all sense of individuality lapses, perception, sensation, thought even, flag and cease, and there remains only a vast, vague sense of the infinite self in which the human self is dissolved and obliterated.

So prominent a feature in this longing or absorption in the infinite, however, was the characteristic mystical condemnation of the finite, that an account of the relations of mystical belief and practice to the affairs of actual life reduces itself largely to a series of negative statements. Closely connected with the dogma of the supreme worth of the absolute, and producing even more conspicuous effects than that, was the obverse dogma of the worthlessness of the immediate, of whatever could be called

“this,” “now,” or “here.” Love of God was considered to involve contempt of man, and since man was nearer, more immediate in experience, than God, mysticism expressed itself, historically, very largely in negations. It acted, in all departments of life, and on all planes—the physical, the intellectual, and the emotional or spiritual—as an anti-naturalistic force, for which, perhaps, the best general name is asceticism.

On the physical plane, asceticism took the form of abstinence and mortification of the flesh. In its milder phases it prompted merely the refusal of all the natural calls of instinct and appetite. Because it was natural to hunger, asceticism required men to fast; because to sleep was natural, it counselled vigils; because men naturally enjoy women’s love, material well-being, and personal initiative, monastic orders imposed the triple oath of celibacy, poverty, and obedience. Of course it is true that there were positive benefits to be derived from all these modes of discipline, and that much could be argued in their favor by mere common-sense; but over and above their positive virtues there was about them an opposition to nature, a violence to human instincts, that even more irresistibly commended

them to true ascetics. A still further application of the same principle was mortification of the flesh. Indian Jogis, Mohammedan dervishes and fakirs, Christian cenobites and anchorites, all, in a word, who held the mystical doctrine of the absolute opposition of body and spirit, believed that to mortify the flesh was to vivify the soul, and carried out their belief with the help of a thousand engines of penance.

On the intellectual plane, the same distrust of man and of nature prompted an agelong opposition to science, to independent metaphysical or religious thinking, and indeed to all forms of free mental activity. The story of Galileo summoned before the seven cardinals at Rome and forced to deny his belief in the heretical doctrine that the earth revolved round the sun is typical of the experiences of almost all venturesome thinkers in the middle age. The application of human intellect to the unravelling of the august mysteries of God was zealously punished as a blasphemy; the only authorized channel of knowledge was revelation. The rational and systematic questioning of nature that has given us modern science was by the true mystical mind held in horror, first because the intelligence is a

human and therefore corrupt instrument, and secondly because nature itself is an illusion, a pitfall for unwary feet that falter in their search for heaven.

An asceticism which saw in the physical and intellectual activities of the natural man more evil than good, could hardly be expected to look more leniently on his emotional life, which is, perhaps, the most intensely human and natural part of him, and of which the organized expression is art. Ordinary human feelings, exercised spontaneously in the present world, and not as mere offerings to the beyond, seemed to the ascetic as unworthy of a God-fearing man as sensuous pleasures and intellectual quests. And especially abhorrent to him was their free embodiment in art. As religion is the expression of man's consciousness of the supernatural, so art is the expression of his delight and joy in the natural. Its work is to build, out of primitive sensations, utterances of feeling and monuments of beauty. But these sensations are all ultimately physical. These feelings are the simple, instinctive feelings of humanity, and this beauty is one that is apprehended by no metaphysical faculty, but by ordinary human powers—by the

senses, the heart, and the mind. Art is the most radically and inexorably human of all man's interests. And since the whole bias of asceticism was against the free development or expression of merely human powers, it was inevitable that mysticism, in which the ascetic element is so considerable, should be even more restrictive than helpful in its influence on art. While it did indeed foster the purely devout and adoring element in artistic expression, it discouraged that full appeal to the whole man by which alone art attains its maturity.

The music of Palestrina's age is probably the most consummate expression in the whole history of art of this peculiar type of feeling, with all its characteristic qualities and limitations. "No other form of chorus music has existed," writes Mr. Edward Dickinson,* "so objective and impersonal, so free from the stress and stir of passion, so plainly reflecting an exalted, spiritualized state of feeling. This music is singularly adapted to reënforce the impression of the Catholic mysteries by reason of its technical form and its peculiar emotional appeal. . . . It is as far as possible removed from profane suggestion; in its

* Op. cit., p. 178.

ineffable calmness, and an indescribable tone of chastened exultation, pure from every trace of struggle, with which it vibrates, it is the most adequate emblem of that eternal repose toward which the believer yearns."

It was, we must now once more insist, these peculiar qualities of feeling to be expressed in mystical art, that reacted to determine the peculiarities of the technique in which they had to be embodied, just as a man's spirit reacts to determine the nature of the body in which its purposes have to be wrought out. That "ineffable calmness," that "chastened exultation," of the mystical temper, could be voiced in sound only through the medium of clear, ethereal vocal tones, combined in chords prevailingly consonant and void of harshness. Such a translucent fabric of tones as was produced by human voices, singing, without instrumental accompaniment, the purest consonances, was best fitted to merge with the vast, cool arch of the cathedral, with the unlocalized murmur and reverberation that stirred in it, and with the somnolent fumes of incense, to form a background apt for mystical contemplation. And then, against this background, the phrases of aspiring but unimpas-

sioned melody which one by one sounded above the general murmur, traced, as it were, arabesques of more definite human feeling. One by one they rose into momentary prominence, to hover above the other voices as prayers hover among the tranquil thoughts of simple and devout minds. There was about them a celestial clarity, an unearthly plangency of accent, but no turmoil or confusion, no hint of mortal pain.

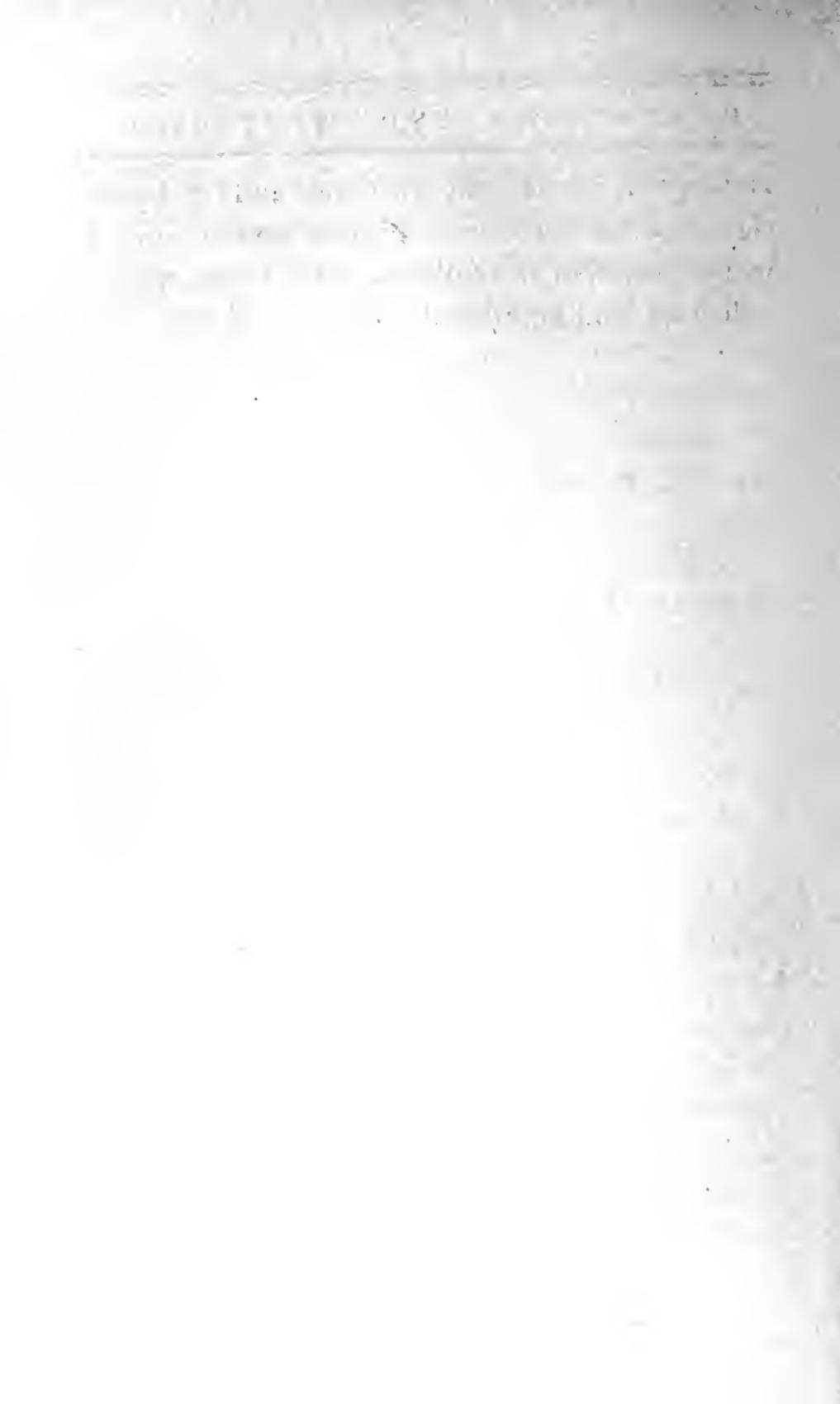
Complete impersonality was attained by the exclusion of dissonance and of meter. The emotional function of dissonance is to suggest, by its harshness, and by its sharp contrast with the consonances by which it is surrounded, the struggle and the fragmentariness of all finite existence. Like a cry of incompleteness yearning to be completed, it is eloquent to us of our loneliness and bitter self-consciousness. Meter similarly insists on reminding us of our petty human selves by stimulating us to make those gestures and motions that bring into full activity our muscular expression, with all its mental consequents. To hear a strong rhythm is to be irresistibly reminded of all those active impulses in us which underlie our sense of finite personality. It was, then, by its negative peculiarities, by its avoid-

ance of all harmonic mordancy and definition, and of all rhythmic vigor, that Palestrina's music secured its impersonality, its freedom from "profane suggestion," and from "every trace of struggle." Its positive and negative qualities thus coöperated so efficiently as to make it an incomparable exponent of the mystical mood. It not only could induce that rapt attitude of worship which was the kernel of mysticism, but it also skilfully avoided all disturbing hints of personal, finite, and secular activities. It comes to our modern ears like a voice from some grey mediæval cloister, tremulous with a divine passion, but utterly void of all those earthly passions in which the sweet is subtly mingled with the bitter, and human pathos is more audible than heavenly peace.

Palestrina marked the culmination of his school; the pure polyphonic style ended with him. Was this merely because his younger contemporaries, overawed by his perfect skill, dared not enter the lists in rivalry with such a master? Or was it rather that men's minds had arrived at the period of a fresh insight, and that the time was ripe for an obliteration of hard and fast distinctions between sacred and secular, spiritual

PALESTRINA AND MYSTICISM

and carnal, eternal and temporal, and for a proclamation of the native dignity and worth of man himself, in the fullness of his sensuous, intellectual, and emotional life?



CHAPTER III
THE MODERN SPIRIT

11. *Thlaspi arvense* L. (syn. *Thlaspi glaucum* L.)

CHAPTER III

THE MODERN SPIRIT



THE need of mastering life, of reducing its multitudinous, thronging details to some sort of order, that shall lack neither the unity which alone can satisfy the mind, nor the variety requisite to do justice to the complexity of experience, is the one perennial need of humanity. The aim of all the chief human undertakings is to find schemes of order: physical science is the quest of order in the material world; morality is the quest of coördination and balance between many individual wills; religion is the search for the One Spirit which contains and fuses together all finite souls; art is the pursuit of that organization of diverse elements, of whatever sort,

in one sensible whole, in which we perceive beauty. But since experience is bewilderingly many-sided and complex, one scheme after another is made only to be discarded as inadequate, and progress entails the constant substitution of more inclusive for less inclusive syntheses. Our most catholic formulas are provisional and temporary ; “opinions are but stages on the road to truth.”

Such a word as “modern” can therefore have but a relative meaning. What is modern to-day will be archaic a hundred years hence. Our contemporary ideas are more liberal than those of our grandfathers, but they will likely appear as the rigid superstitions of a dark age to our still more enlightened descendants. When we speak of the modern spirit we say nothing in regard to the future ; we name simply the attitude of mind which characterizes the present as contrasted with the past. That new vision or intuition or instinct of truth by which we of to-day reinterpret in more liberal wise the elements of experience either interpreted too narrowly or quite ignored by the earlier generations—that is the “modern spirit.”

We have been considering at some length, in

the foregoing chapter, the characteristic mystical attitude of the mediæval mind. We have seen how the typical thinkers of the middle age, aware of good but unable to identify it with an actual world so full of evil, made a sharp division, a total breach, between the actual and the divine. The mystic cut the Gordian knot of the world-problem by rejecting the actual altogether from his house of life. His scheme had its own harmony, unity, rationality ; but being built upon an exclusion, it had in the nature of things to give place in course of time to a scheme less disregardful of the true wealth and reality of experience. The modern mind turned away from mysticism, envisaged the world afresh, and reinterpreted truth in terms of idealism.

Idealism is, in essence, a belief in the possibility of attaining the divine through a selective manipulation of the actual. In the respect it pays to finite life lies its sharp contrast with mysticism. It has gone far to obliterate the breach between the actual and the divine which the mystic had made so wide ; it has tried to find the eternal in the temporal, and to nourish the spirit by guiding and developing, rather than by mor-

tifying, the flesh.* Mysticism spurned the "this," the "here," the "now;" idealism, on the contrary, is on its hither side, so to speak, identical with realism. The idealist believes in the immediate, and loves the finite, as much as the crassest realist. He finds in it the point of departure of all desirable truths, the scaffolding for all mansions of the spirit. But he differs from the realist in that he does not stop with the real, but, using it as material for idealism, selects from it the elements of his heart's desire. The actual world is to him a sort of keyboard on which he strikes those chords, and those only, which he wishes to hear. He is, indeed, an artist in life, and his method is the true artistic method of selection and synthesis. But on the other hand, he differs even more radically from the mystic, in that he makes the very materials of his Celestial City out of those earthly, momentary, and finite experiences that the latter rejects as dross. All three types of thought find themselves confronted by the opposition between actual facts and spiritual desires which is so characteristic of

* "Vice," says Mr. George Bernard Shaw in his brilliant, paradoxical way, "is waste of life. Poverty, obedience, and celibacy are the canonical vices."

our world : the mystic repudiates the facts ; the realist discredits the desires ; the idealist sets out to win, by a selective or artistic manipulation of the facts, the satisfaction of the desires.

Characteristic of idealism is therefore its respect for the actual, in all its phases. It respects, to begin with, the human body. The tendency of modern thought is towards a wise paganism in physical life, towards a substitution of hygiene for mortification, of moderation for abstinence, of the liberal conception of " *mens sana in corpore sano* " for the monkish ideal of a soul gradually burning up and sloughing off its tene-
ment. Development of the body is increasingly manifesting its true relation to the spiritual enter-
prises of men—a relation that repression of it only obscured and distorted. The Hermit of Carmel, in the poem of that name,* spends his days in a painful, endless, and futile struggle to eradicate fleshly lusts ; the young knight knows another sort of purity, more joyful and bountiful, the purity of the lover who remembers his beloved. Idealism, like that happy knight,

* "The Hermit of Carmel, and Other Poems," by George Santayana, New York, 1901.

remembers that it is the mission and destiny of flesh to wait on spirit.

Again, idealism respects the intellect. The great development of the physical sciences, generally considered the most striking fact in nineteenth century history, is the necessary result of an idealistic faith in the powers of human observation and reason. The modern mind, believing in its own ability to interrogate nature, has done so with tireless energy, recording the answers obtained in half a hundred special "sciences," ranging from histology to psychology. It has applied the same method introspectively to such good purpose that metaphysics, in the hands of Kant and his successors, has radically altered our conception of how we know truth, and what sort of truth it is that we know. Nor have the contributions of the enfranchised intellect stopped with philosophy; they have immensely deepened and vivified religion. The doctrine of evolution, for example, a product of the most remarkable keenness, liberality, and patience in intellectual research, has substituted for the childish anthropomorphic doctrine of creation the wondrously vital modern conception of a God not remote and detached, but

nearer than thought and more enveloping than the atmosphere, incarnate in every atom and regnant in every mind.

The emotional or spiritual essence in man is as much respected by idealism as his body and his intellect. Loyalty to actual feelings as they well up spontaneously in the heart, rather than mere conformity to custom, is the modern attitude in all spheres of voluntary life. Personal conduct is a truer mirror of individual feeling than it used to be. What a contrast the student of literature observes between the conventional worldliness of eighteenth-century manners and morals and the intense individualism of the early nineteenth-century poets in England and of our own transcendentalist writers—an individualism which was the logical outcome of the idealist's championship of human emotion in and for itself. The greatest men are of course always ahead of their age, but such sturdy, independent lives as Thoreau's, Whitman's, Darwin's, George Eliot's, Stevenson's, would have created even more consternation in the eighteenth century than they did in the nineteenth, dimly stirred to freer ideals. The same regard for emotional verities that has so deepened individual life is pro-

ducing a revolution in all social relations. They are constantly becoming more spontaneous and genuine—less matters of tradition. Class boundaries are being obliterated, a man's success and position coming to depend less on family and station, more on the man himself. Women's economic progress, combined with an increasing sense in both women and men of the real sacredness and responsibility of love between the sexes, is making marriage, in many ways the most vital of all social relations, a free and joyful bond between equals, rather than a yoke imposed by egotism and endured by helplessness. In sum, the democratic ideal is substituting, in all social relations, the genuine inner cohesion for the artificial mortar and cement of external usage. Finally, it is the same regard for inner realities, so characteristic of idealism, that is giving to men's religious experience a new profundity. When once the heart is awakened, it needs no longer the assurance of antique books that God exists, and it can worship him no longer as a mere formula, universal because featureless. Intuition supplants revelation, and men enter into a personal relation with the God they had before conceived as austere, characterless, and remote. Modern

nonconformity is an indication of the reality of modern religious feeling.

In countless ways we thus discern the working of the idealistic impulse in our contemporary life. Independence in personal conduct and thought, democracy in social relations, nonconformity in religion, stand out as salient features of the modern world, especially when we contrast them with the conventionality, paternalism, and ecclesiasticism of the mediæval.

The foregoing remarks, together with the reflections they will suggest to the reader, may perhaps suffice to show that idealism has met at least one of the requirements of human progress, by filling the mind with a vastly richer and more various mass of contents than mysticism admitted. The realities it takes account of are far less pathetically inadequate to match the actual richness of experience than the thin, impalpable, and austere conceptions of the mystic. Compared with his, the world of the idealist is a breathing, moving world, not entirely void of the infinite tragedy and comedy of life itself. Something of passion and pathos it has, and it is held in shape by the tough fibres of

commonplace—for even the trivial is not excluded. All this increase of complexity, however, would be quite nugatory were a principle of unity lacking. The complexity must be built into an order if it is to be truly a synthesis, satisfying to the mind as well as to the sense of reality.

It is, therefore, a fact of capital importance, that idealism does succeed in unifying, as well as in enriching, our conceptions of life. It systematizes, at the same time that it broadens, our views. Much as it insists on the variety of experience, even more does it assert its organic unity. Indeed, the central ideal of idealism, its very heart of hearts, is its belief in the wholeness, the organized integrity, of the universe. It respects the body, the mind, and the soul of man; but even more it respects the whole man, in just balance and full inward coöperation of functions. Believing man to be an organism, it sets supreme store by his full or organic activity, and deplores undue prominence in any element of his life, as injuring the harmony of the whole. Ardently as it champions individual initiative, it demonstrates, through philosophy, that the very consciousness of the individual is dependent on

his social relations.* It recognizes that democracy can exist only through mutual service, and that freedom is based on a universal sense of responsibility. It is clearly aware that a personal relation with God comes only to him who is willing to obey God, not in a spirit of passive endurance, but with active joy, as a part serving the whole in which it has its being. This recognition of a just relation to the whole as the supreme ideal of all partial existences is testified to most strikingly by our very vocabulary, the natural repository of our beliefs. The word "health," denoting physical well-being, is derived from the Anglo-Saxon "hal," or whole; "sanity," signifying mental well-being, is from the Latin word for the same idea, "sanus;" and we name the most indispensable of moral traits "integrity." True idealism is in no way more certainly to be distinguished from its sentimental counterfeits than by its constant recognition that the preservation of the wholeness, as well as the fullness, of man's nature, is the *sine qua non* of human welfare. It values every least manifestation of his nature, because it considers each

* See the writings of Royce, Baldwin, and other writers on the social genesis of consciousness.

one sacred ; but it values even more the coördination and harmony of all.

Turning from the consideration of idealism in its general effect on modern life to examine its more special effect upon art, we recognize at once its importance as an æsthetic force. Art is the expression of man's physical, emotional, and spiritual life, in organized fullness. Wherever there is direct, complete, and beautiful expression of what seems to man precious, there is art. Wherever, on the contrary, there is suppression of any genuine human impulse, in fancied service to some other, as in the case of mediæval mysticism, there is artistic immaturity or arrest ; and wherever there is an exaggerated development of any one impulse, at the expense of others and of the balance or symmetry of all, as in the cases of modern French realistic literature and of program music, for example, there is artistic decadence. And since idealism insists both on the claims of all legitimate human impulses to recognition, and on their submission to adjustment in the interests of a rounded human nature, idealism is a potent stimulus to true art.

All this is amply illustrated in that great de-

velopment of art under the spur of idealism which we name the Renaissance. By renaissance, or rebirth, is meant a reawakening of the human spirit to fuller activity, an increased recognition of its native dignity and value as transcending all artificial sanctions and limits. The renaissance period was, as it were, the adolescence of humanity. It was the time of putting away childish things—passive dependence on authority, superstition, timorous conventionality—and of asserting the freedom and the responsibilities of men. In the race, as in the individual, it was primarily an internal event, which reached external expression only with difficulty and after a struggle. The youth has his vague internal sense of the sacredness of his convictions long before he can work these out into the fabric of actual life. A long fight with stubborn customs, with indifferent circumstances, must take place before ideals can become actualities. Just so, the idealism of the race had to meet in mortal combat a thousand opposing conditions, had to conquer its foes and acquire its ways and means, before it could victoriously express itself in art. In other words, feeling had to enter into and transform technique in order that the art might voice fully

the impulse that animated it. When we speak of the renaissance, therefore, we mean no narrow, special period of time, precisely dated, like a battle or a treaty. We mean a new spirit of liberty and self-respect in the human mind, which expressed itself in one way at one time, in another at another, according to the facility and promptitude with which it acquired mastery over these ways. The expression followed the effort only after a long interval, and different expressions came at different epochs, far apart in time. In a general way we may say that the Renaissance has occupied the centuries of our era from the fourteenth to the one in which we live. But each art has also had its special period of development, reaching in its own good time the goal of its own particular efforts, under the conditions of its own peculiar medium.

There are as a rule several successive stages in the evolution an art thus undergoes under the spur of idealism. First there is the vague inner sense of a new weight of meaning to be expressed, a fresh insight or intuition that demands utterance. Men awake to the true value of those inner impressions and feelings which have so long been smothered under conventions and

the worship of the external. They know not what to do with them, how to voice them ; but they have at least what Stevenson calls “ that impotent sense of his own value, as of a ship aground, which is one of the agonies of youth.” This may be called the period of the fresh insight. Then comes the period in which some sort of technical medium is arduously developed for the expression of the new impulse. This period, in which a vast work must be done by patient experiment, by slow adaptation, without standards and without models, is necessarily long and laborious. Often the prompting insight is almost forgotten in the toil, and the initial passion seems to be lost in dry formalism and pedantry. But all the while ways and means are being invented, problems solved, and traditions established, even as, while the youth toils at desk or plough or counter, forgetful, for the moment, of the ideals that sent him thither, habits are being formed, mastery is being acquired. The period of technical equipment, then, if it be properly conducted, leads over into the period of achievement, in which the original impulses are adequately expressed by means of the acquired skill. This is the time of consumma-

tion, of maturity, of balance between the means and the ends of expression. Such was the age of Pericles in Greek sculpture, the age of Sophocles in Greek drama, the Elizabethan age in English drama, the age of Leonardo and Michelangelo in Italian painting, the age of Wordsworth and Keats in English lyric poetry. Unfortunately, the period of maturity is generally followed by still another period, in which the original impulse overshoots its mark and becomes embodied in distorted, grotesque, and unbeautiful forms. So weak is human nature that it can seldom recognize justly its own value without going further, without precipitating itself into the pitfall of over-valuation, pride, and arrogant self-assertion. The balance of all the elements of art to which idealism aspires is then lost ; special elements become preponderant, special effects are made fetishes, and degeneration ensues. Ripeness leads over into decay ; wholeness or sanity is lost, and partiality paves the way to disintegration.

Mediæval painting, for example, was exceedingly rigid, dry, and conventional. The effort of the ecclesiastical painters was merely to symbolize religious truths ; they were like chronic-

lers, who aim at narrating facts, rather than like ballad-writers and minstrels who are interested also in the beauty of their language, the richness, charm, and intrinsic appeal of their images and phraseology. But by imperceptible degrees, led on by the natural human delight in shapeliness of form and luxury of color, and learning to make the skill acquired in delineation subserve the higher and more immediate purposes of art, the painters of the Renaissance gradually substituted for this merely symbolic treatment a broader one, in which human beauty was as much sought as religious edification. The nude figure was lovingly studied, not because the saints happened to be men, but because men are beautiful. Garments, draperies, fabrics received a new attention, in the interests, not of historical accuracy, but of the intrinsic pleasantness of textures and tints. Postures were softened, adjusted, made less angular and uncompromising than in the almost chart-like early frescoes. Atmosphere, chiaroscuro, composition, balance, were deemed worthy of the efforts of painters who considered art an end in itself. Eventually, by the great pictures of the Venetian, Florentine, and Neapolitan masters, all the human faculties

were called into harmonious activity ; the eye was delighted, the feelings were wooed and stimulated, the imagination was touched and informed. "Instead of riveting the fetters of ecclesiastical authority," says J. A. Symonds,* "instead of enforcing mysticism and asceticism, [art] really restored to humanity the sense of its own dignity and beauty, and helped to prove the untenability of the mediæval standpoint; for art is essentially and uncontrollably free, and, what is more, is free precisely in that realm of sensuous delightfulness from which cloistral religion turns aside to seek her own ecstatic liberty of contemplation." Whether painting, which thus by insistence on the intrinsic values of its medium attained maturity, then carried the process too far, and lost roundness and balance by prizes mere richness of color above all else, whether, in a word, its consummation was followed by a decadence, is a question too large for discussion here. But it is beyond doubt that painting went through the first three phases of growth pointed out as the results in art of an idealistic impulse.

In the same way, the story of music from the beginning of the seventeenth century up to Bee-

* "The Renaissance in Italy."

thoven, or throughout that section of its history in which we are at present interested, was essentially the story of a renaissance, or novel artistic development, under the spur of idealism. Looking at it from the vantage-point now reached, we easily trace its evolution through the several regular stages. In the Florentine reformers' abandonment of old conventions and their half-conscious aspiration towards a new utterance, we discern the first stage of the movement, that of the novel impulse; in the steadfast and efficient delving away at technical methods, at the involutions of harmony, counterpoint, and form, which characterized many of the later composers of the seventeenth century, and occupied much of the attention of even such men as Haydn and Mozart, we trace the second stage, that of equipment; and in the glorious works of Beethoven, who set the keystone in the arch, we find the stage of consummation and fulfilment. Springing from the foundation of the mystical art of Palestrina much as modern Italian painting sprang from the foundation of mediæval religious delineation, the art of Pure Music reached, in the masterpieces of Beethoven, its maturity.

Now, as we saw in the first chapter, the mature art of Pure Music, which may be defined as the art of combining pure tones, without words, into forms expressive of our fundamental emotional life, and congruous with one another, or beautiful, necessarily possesses three kinds of value, or modes of effect, to which we have assigned the descriptive labels “sensuous,” “expressive,” and “aesthetic.” Music has sensuous value in proportion to the actual physical gratification afforded us by the tones that compose it; it has expressive value proportional to the degree in which it excites in us, by association and suggestion, the fundamental emotions or feelings; it has aesthetic value proportional to its success in assimilating or organizing all its various effects into clear unity, thus giving us that sense of ordered richness which we call beauty. If it be true, then, that music, during the seventeenth century, under the spur of the idealistic or modern spirit, developed from a primitive into a mature art, it is obvious that this development must have rested on progress made in all three kinds of effect; and it becomes a matter of much interest to trace at least some of the chief phases

of this three-fold blossoming. In the remaining portion of the present chapter, accordingly, we shall study the most striking features of the progress made during the seventeenth century in sensuous charm and in expressive power ; and in the following chapter we shall examine those principles of pure music which underlie its highest, most indispensable quality of all—that of beauty, or final unity and harmony of impression.

Remarkable, in the first place, is the development the mere material medium of music underwent in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The sensuous fact at the bottom of all music being the tone, the sensuous value of music depends on the kind of tones employed and on the modes of their combination, just as the sensuous value of a painting depends on the purity and richness of the pigments used and on the harmoniousness of their arrangement. So long as composers dealt either with choirs of human voices alone, or with a few crude instruments like the organs of Bach's predecessors, the violins of the early sixteenth century, and the spinets and clavichords of the same period, they could get little variety or sonority of tonal color. But

in the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was made a wonderful mechanical advance. The violin, the most important of all instruments, not only because of its inimitable beauty and expressiveness of tone but because it is the nucleus of the orchestra and of the string quartet, was brought, by the Amatis, Giuseppe Guarneri, and Antonio Stradivari, the famous Cremonese violin-makers who flourished from about 1550 to 1737, to a degree of perfection which the utmost modern ingenuity has been unable to exceed. The organ, which in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was so cumbersome that each key had to be struck by the entire fist, came by 1600 to something like its modern condition, as may be seen by looking at the pieces written for it by Frescobaldi (1583-1644) and Buxtehude (1637-1707). The prototypes of the modern piano were rather slower to develop. At the beginning of the sixteenth century the clavichord was a smallish oblong box without legs, placed on a table when played; its compass was somewhat over four octaves; one set of strings had to suffice for several keys, each key being provided with a metal tangent or tongue that not only sounded the string, but at

the same time “stopped” it at the requisite point for producing the desired tone. The “damping” or silencing of the strings, entrusted in the modern piano to the felt dampers, was often done by the left hand of the player. The spinet differed from the clavichord in that its tones were produced by a hard piece of quill that plucked the string. Both instruments gave but weak, short, and rather characterless sounds. But all through the period we are considering they were being experimented upon and slowly improved in sonority, variety, and color of tone.

But even after they are provided with perfected instruments, men are still much restricted in their search for lovely effects of tone unless they have also a well-developed tonal technique, or science of harmony. The tools are not enough ; the use of them must also be known. As we have seen, however, the harmony of Palestrina and his school was for all its purity somewhat colorless and flat. A harmonic fabric made up exclusively of consonant chords is like a picture painted altogether with pure, light colors ; it is wonderfully bright and transparent, but its very purity makes it lack force. For the sake

of contrast an admixture of dissonances is required, much as shadow is required in a picture, or harshness and irregularity in a poem. The entirely sweet, soft, and mellifluous series of chords at first charms, but finally cloys.

One of the important tasks of seventeenth century composers, therefore, was to find out how to introduce dissonances in such a way as to invigorate without disrupting the fabric. Their harshness must not be obtruded, but it must be used. The Florentine reformers and their successors showed great skill in solving the problem. They learned how to "prepare" a dissonance, that is, to let one of its constituent tones appear in a consonance and then hold over while other voices moved to dissonant intervals; they experimented in harsher and harsher dissonances, admitting them only with great circumspection, but using their characteristic qualities with striking effect; and they established, as cadences, conventional formulæ of chords containing dissonant intervals, which became by mere force of repetition acceptable and familiar. In this way they introduced into the material of music a variety and range of color that consonances alone could never give. "Monteverde," says Mr.

R. A. Streatfield, “with his orchestra of thirty-nine instruments—brass, wood and strings complete—his rich and brilliant harmony, sounding so strangely beautiful to ears accustomed only to the severity of the polyphonic school, and his delicious and affecting melodies, sometimes rising almost to the dignity of an Aria, must have seemed something more than human to the eager Venetians as they listened for the first time to music as rich in color as the gleaming marbles of the Cà d’Ora or the radiant canvases of Titian and Giorgione.” If we could disabuse our minds of all emotional and æsthetic perceptions while listening to modern music, we should still find it vastly superior to the choral art of the middle ages in its purely sensuous richness. Sensuously it is a kaleidoscope of shifting effects, now harsh, now sweet, now resonant and sibilant, the next moment infinitely wooing and grateful ; and through all ever changing its outlines and melting from color to color like the iridescent film of a soap-bubble.

But of course we cannot disabuse our minds of emotional and æsthetic perceptions ; no human being can divest himself of such essential

parts of his nature; and indeed it was even more in obedience to higher requirements than for the sake of mere sensuous richness that the musicians of the renaissance period so radically remodelled their art. The essence of their reforms is to be looked for, not in the increase of the first or sensuous value of music, but in the enhancement of its expressiveness, and of its plastic beauty.

Expression, in general, may be defined as the presentation of a feeling or idea by means of an impression. The impression may act either directly, calling up the specific idea or feeling by virtue of a long-established association between them, or more generally, by simply inducing a state of mind congruous with the expression desired, and so tending to generate it. The former is the case in verbal expression (language), where certain definite symbols, words, are immemorially coupled in our minds with certain ideas, conceptions, or feelings, so that when we hear the word we immediately think the thing. Musical expression differs from verbal expression in that it does not act by this direct arbitrary symbolism, but rather by the more subtle general process which instills a feeling by setting up

its appropriate atmosphere or *milieu*. It is much vaguer and more general, and for that very reason far more potent. The word "love," for example, arbitrarily denotes a certain idea, not because it is anything like the idea, but because we all agree that that word is to mean that thing.* An amorous piece of music, on the contrary, utters no definite symbol; it makes our heart beat faster and deeper, it makes our blood circulate, it ravishes our senses and our minds, until whether we will or not we know what it says, though for our lives we could not put its burden into words.

It is by this direct establishment in us of a congruous or favorable state of mind that the consonances of the mediæval music express religious peace; and it is no otherwise that dissonance, that powerful engine of the modern musician, expresses the inward division, the struggle and sweet torment, of idealistic states of feeling. The harshness, disagreeable in itself but essential to a process in which it is organically linked with sweetness and rest, arouses by

* In the case of onomatopoetic words, of course, the general expression is added to the specific one—the word does sound like the thing.

an association of ideas a sense of the stern beauty, the tragic splendor, of the experience of the human heart. It reproduces in the sphere of sound that same series of states, that pain merging into joy, which we recognize in the sphere of our consciousness as so deeply characteristic of finite life. And so doing, it suggests or shadows forth the very essence of our nature, it echoes the utterance of our very hearts. It is no expurgated reading of the book of life: it is the full text, with all its shuddering horror and all its celestial joy.

Probably of all the employers of dissonance for the purpose of emotional expression, in the whole course of the seventeenth century, when the aims of musicians were so tentative that it required courage to brave convention, the most daring was Claudio Monteverde. "As Monteverde most frankly of all musicians of his time," writes Sir Hubert Parry,* "regarded music as an art of expression, and discords as the most poignant means of representing human feeling, he very soon began to rouse the ire of those who were not prepared to sacrifice the teaching of centuries and their own feeling of what really

*"The Oxford History of Music," vol. III, p. 45.

was artistic without protest. That he should presume to write such simple things as ninths and sevenths without duly sounding them first as concordant notes * was so completely at variance with the whole intention of their art that it struck them with consternation. And well it might, for small as these first steps were they presaged the inevitable end of the placid devotional music. The suddenness of the poignancy which unprepared discords conveyed to the mind implied a quality of passionate feeling which musicians had never hitherto regarded as within the legitimate scope of musical art. They had never hitherto even looked through the door which opened upon the domains of human passion. Once it was opened, the subjective art of the church school, and the submissive devotionalism of the church composers, was bound to come rapidly to an end. Men tasted of the tree of knowledge, and the paradise of innocence was thenceforth forbidden them. Monteverde was the man who first tasted and gave his fellow men to eat of the fruit ; and from the accounts given of the effect it produced upon them they ate with avidity and craved for more."

* "Preparation": see above, page 104.

Parry gives in illustration of Monteverde's style a fragment known as "Ariadne's Lament," from the opera "Arianna," so characteristic that it must be reprinted here :

Figure IV. "Ariadne's Lament," by MONTEVERDE.

La - scia - - - te - mi mo - ri - re!

La - scia - te - mi mo - ri - re! E che vo -

le - te voi che mi con - for - te

THE MODERN SPIRIT

The musical score consists of three staves of music. The top staff is in treble clef, the middle staff in bass clef, and the bottom staff in bass clef. The lyrics are written in Italian and are as follows:

In co - si du - ra sor - te, in co - si gran mar -
ti - re? La - scia - te - mi mo - ri - re!
la - scia - te - mi mo - ri - re!

The music features various note values (eighth and sixteenth notes), rests, and dynamic markings. The key signature changes between measures, and the time signature appears to be common time. The bass clef staff includes several bassoon-like slurs and grace notes.

In studying this remarkable fragment, the reader will not only note the striking unprepared dissonances of measures 2, 5, 11 and 13 (the latter peculiarly poignant), but if he will take the trouble to compare the effect of the

passage as a whole with that of the bit of Palestrina given in Fig. III., he will be amazed at the increase in expressiveness, especially if it be remembered that "Arianna" was produced probably in 1607, or only thirteen years after Palestrina's death. The "Lament" is reported to have moved everyone who heard it to tears. Its pathos is largely due to the skilful way in which harsh dissonances are made to alternate with the consonances into which they naturally and inevitably lead—a process which, though not directly expressive of the facts of human emotion, in the sense in which the word is directly symbolic of the thing which usage has coupled with it, is yet indirectly and generally expressive, in that it reproduces in tones a series of impressions identical with the series of feelings we everywhere experience in actual life. Pain linked to pleasure by an organic bond—that is the universal experience of everyone who cherishes an ideal, since an ideal is a yearning for something which now is not, but which must eventually come to be.

The melodic character of the "Lament" is as impressive as its harmonic style. In its short and poignant phrases the accent of passion is

unmistakably heard. And this is true not only of Monteverde's work as a whole, but of that of all the other composers of the Florentine "new music." As early as the year 1600 Jacopo Peri wrote an opera on the subject of Euridice, to be performed at the wedding of Henry IV of France to Maria Medici. A study of the passages in which he tried to express the grief of Orpheus at the loss of Euridice, and his joy in their reunion, brings home forcibly to the mind the advance that composers had even at that time made in eloquence of expression. They are as follows:

Figure V. Two passages from Peri's "Euridice."

O mio core O mio spe - me O pace O vi - ta

Ohi - - me Chi mi t'ha tol

Ohi - - me Chi mi t'ha tol

Ohi - - me Chi mi t'ha tol

BEETHOVEN AND HIS FORERUNNERS

to Chi - mi t'ha tol - to Ohi - me..

et cetera.
.... de - - ve se - gi - - - ta

Gio - i - te al canto mio

sel - ve fron - do - se Gio - i - te ama - ti

THE MODERN SPIRIT

col - li e d'ogni in - tor - no.

Ec - co rim - bom - bi dal - le valle as - co - se.

In spite of the primitiveness of the style, there is considerable force and even definiteness of expression here. As Sir Hubert Parry points out: "the phrases which express bereavement and sorrow are tortuous, irregular, spasmodic—broken with catching breath and wailing accent; whereas the expression of joy is flowing, easy and continuous." It was in fact the aim of the inventors of the type of operatic recitative here exemplified, to imitate, while idealizing, the actual cadence of the voice in emotional speech. The music of the choral epoch had carefully avoided the impression of passionate feeling;

the new music as persistently sought it. The old music had been written for chorus, which by mere virtue of numbers is quite impersonal ; the new was put into the mouths of individuals. The melodic style of the former was dignified, formal, severe ; that of the latter was mobile, flexible, constantly adaptable to the most subtle changes of mood. Here again, then, we see the effect of the idealistic impulse on music. Idealism, insisting on the worth of finite experience, focusses man's attention on himself, on his actual feelings, petty as well as universal, base and noble alike, and makes him, whether for good or evil, vividly self-conscious. It believes in the hopes and fears, the aspirations and disappointments, of men and women ; believes that in human beings, in spite of their pathetic weakness, there is a unique original value, not to be denied without crippling that august whole of which they are the minute but essential parts. The music of Peri, Caccini, and Cavaliere, and later of Monteverde, succeeded in voicing, at first dimly but with increasing eloquence, the primitive human emotions that mysticism had disdained as worldly ; the tendency they initiated gathered force apace, and passed with Ca-

valli and Lulli into France, where it culminated in the work of Gluck. The great contribution of early modern opera to pure music was the accent of genuine and various human feeling.

A third tendency toward distinctively modern methods that was steadily gaining ground throughout this period was the tendency toward metrical and rhythmic vigor. We have seen how vigorous meter, in music, serves to express our active impulses, how it grows out of that ordered gesticulation we name dance.* We have seen how devoid was the mediæval choral music of meter,† and indeed how inappropriate to its peculiar genius metrical qualities would have been.‡ The moment men's attitude toward their own ordinary activities changed, however, and they began to see in them life rather than death, their expression in art became a desideratum. And it is a fact that very early in the sixteenth century, even before the pure choral music had reached its perfect maturity, some composers had begun to write simple dances for unaccompanied instruments, generally a combination of strings with harpsichord.

*See Chap. I, p. 9. †See Chap. II, p. 12.

‡See Chap. II, p. 26.

For a long while these efforts remained tentative and inchoate, because the men who made them were neither very clearly aware what they were trying to do, nor acquainted with technical means for doing it. But the scheme of treating dances as the basis of instrumental movements the chief expression of which was that of energy, vitality, the more active and effervescent emotions, was afterwards elaborated by more trained masters, and eventually bore fruit in the innumerable suites and partitas, or bundles of dances, of the eighteenth century, and in the symphonic minuet and scherzo.

The mere fact that composers of the seventeenth century paid respectful attention to the popular minstrelsy, which had been treated with such scant courtesy by ecclesiastical masters, and that they so persistently imitated its methods, is in itself strong testimony to the change of attitude that was taking place. The songs and dances of the people are the most spontaneous expressions of purely personal feeling in the entire range of music. They were upwellings of primitive emotion, as instinctive and unsophisticated as the cries and gestures from which they were developed. And for these

reasons they were norms of the proper expression of naïve feeling in music—all music, so far as it aims to express personal feeling at all, makes use of the melodic phrases derived from the cry, and of the dance-rhythms derived from the gesture. Consequently, so soon as musical artists became inspired with the new ideal of personal expression, they turned to the popular music for inspiration and methods.

Thus in all ways the tendency of music in the seventeenth century was toward a fuller, more varied, and more poignant emotional expressiveness. Men were willing to forego without a murmur all the advantages of the perfected technique of the earlier choral age, and to trust themselves on the pathless sea of the New Music, because, like the pilgrims who in the same century left European civilization behind them to seek a larger if more difficult life in an uncharted country, they were inspired by a love of the human spirit in its fullness and freedom. All arbitrary limitations and denials of it, no matter how hallowed by long usage, were to them not religious, but sacrilegious. To them, as to Terence, “nothing human was alien”; and they might have cried, with Whit-

man, to every human trait, however trivial, ignoble, or commonplace, "Not till the sun excludes you do I exclude you."

We need not wonder that for a while they paused helpless before the task of assimilating into an order all these rich materials that their humanism had evoked out of chaos. At first they were more discoverers than artists. But genuine progress, as we say, takes place only when a richer variety is stamped with a broader but still obvious unity. Art is not merely expression, of howsoever varied and penetrative a quality ; it is congruous, harmonious expression, delighting us not only mediately by what it says, but immediately by what it is. In other words, it rises from the plane of interest to the plane of beauty, and becomes genuine art, only by the possession of that third or aesthetic value which depends on the ultimate unity of all the various factors of effect. This highest value music came, in the course of time, to possess ; and the conquest of new forms, intrinsically beautiful, in which all the novel sensuous and expressive effects could be embodied, was of all the achievements of the seventeenth century the most important.

It remains, therefore, to study, in another chapter, the means by which musicians learned, after long trial and patient experiment, to give shape and integral life to all this motley array of feelings and effects that they had summoned out of the depths of the human spirit. Their task, as may easily be believed, was an arduous one. We need not follow all the steps they took on that long road. It will suffice to examine some of the more important stages of their progress, to get before our minds the general artistic principles which underlay their practices, and to see what point they had reached by the time Haydn, the first great forerunner of Beethoven, came to take his share in their great enterprise.

CHAPTER IV
THE PRINCIPLES OF PURE
MUSIC

CHAPTER IV

THE PRINCIPLES OF PURE MUSIC



JUST as success in the intellectual and moral worlds results from power to shape ideas and conduct, to make syntheses which combine the most various elements in unity, so artistic success results from the power to shape into a single organism the various elements of artistic effect. Art may make a deep appeal to us by the richness of its sensuous charm, and a still deeper by the eloquence of its emotional expression; the deepest of all appeals it will not make, we have asserted, unless, by marshalling its materials into an obvious order, it adds to its sensuous and expressive charms the æsthetic charm, the greatest of all—beauty. Art, we hinted, was beautiful in the proportion of its unified variety; and we

set ourselves to see what methods men gradually worked out, in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, by which the wonderfully various effects of their new music could be stamped with final unity.

In the fact that they attain beauty through the presentation of variety in unity, all the arts are alike; yet they differ much in the way they accomplish this end, because of their differing conditions. Those arts, notably sculpture, painting, and architecture, which adjust their materials in space, necessarily use methods quite different from those of the temporal arts of literature and music, which, existing solely in time, have no spatial relations of any sort. The spatial arts, presenting all their elements simultaneously, differentiate and at the same time interlink them by means of relative position, size, and prominence. In a well designed figure or group of figures, in sculpture, there is always a balance of masses, by which the whole work, however diverse in detail, is knit into unity. The centre of gravity is kept well in toward the centre of the entire mass; all the features at the extreme edges lead the eye back to the middle to rest; there is centralization of

THE PRINCIPLES OF PURE MUSIC

effect, balance, poise. In a good picture, all spots of high light, all prominent lines, all striking lineaments of every sort, are similarly contrived to equalize the tensions of the eye, to keep it in that state of attentive rest, or anchored discursiveness, which is so indescribably delightful. The same is true of all well-proportioned buildings and other architectural monuments. Activity of eye and mind are stimulated, but also governed and directed. Howsoever the eye, in looking at any good picture, statue or piece of architecture, may quest and rove, it is constantly brought, by the gentle power of good design, back to the centre of rest; the sense of interesting variety is always wedded with the sense of ultimate completeness and repose.

In the temporal arts of literature and music the same effect is gained by quite different means. Here the elements are not presented simultaneously, spread out for the attention to wander from and revert to at will. Each is presented but for a moment, after which it exists only in the memory. Nevertheless all literature and music worthy the name of art give us, in common with the spatial arts, the sense

of symmetrical shape, of ordered profusion. Though we are aware of each single lineament but for an instant, after which it is supplanted by the next, yet we know that all combine into just as complete and satisfying a scheme as that of the well-designed statuary group, the well-composed picture, or the well-proportioned building. This consciousness of form or design in a series of momentary impressions, on which all the high aesthetic value of the temporal arts depends, is made possible to us by our mental powers of memory and recognition. Literature and music deal with memorable units, which are repeated. Familiarity with their methods quickly accustoms us to expect the repetitions; whereupon there arises a succession of expectations, followed by their fulfilments, by which the so fleeting impressions are arranged in our minds in a fixed and satisfying order. And so arises the sense of beauty in the contemplation of a poem or a piece of music.

In poetry two different modes of repetition are utilized, each arousing its own peculiar expectation, which combines with its fulfilment to give the sense of order. The first mode is that

of metrical repetition, the establishment and reiteration of a certain scheme of accentuation of syllables practically equal in duration. In heroic verse, for example, the scheme is a succession of ten syllables, every alternate one accented, and beginning with an unaccented. When a single line of this sort is heard, it forms a pattern in the mind, and arouses an expectation of another of the same sort. The fulfilment of the expectation gives rise to the sense of form. In rhymed verse, a second kind of repetition is added to this fundamental metrical one, namely, the repetition of the terminal sound of the line. When we read "'Tis not enough no harshness gives offence," the obviously regular character of it in respect of accent leads us to expect very confidently another line of the same metrical structure; and our familiarity with rhyme disposes us to think it highly probable that the new line will moreover end with a sound similar to the final one in "offence;" so that when the line comes—"The sound must seem an echo to the sense,"—it fulfils both of our expectations, and we get a double sense of design in it. The rhythm, or reiteration of the metrical scheme, is supplemented by the

rhyme, or repetition of the terminal sound. In the more complex forms of verse the two schemes of design not only become far more subtle in their single application, but are made to coöperate and reënforce each other in all sorts of ingenious ways. The couplet, the ordinary quatrain, the Omar Khayyam quatrain, *terza rima*, the rondeau, the rondel, the triolet, and all the stanza forms, are simply different schemes of combining rhythm and rhyme, the two fundamental formative devices of all poetry.

Like poetry, music welds its elements by means of two modes of arousing and fulfilling our expectations; but these, though they are somewhat analogous to poetic rhythm and rhyme, are so much less close to our ordinary experience that they will need a slightly more detailed explanation.

All modern music is divided up into beats, or equal time divisions, arranged into groups or measures by some regular system of accentuation. The accented beats, like the accented syllables in verse, impress the mind as goals of movement, in reference to which the light beats are felt as transitions or preparations. The

regularity of the alternation of transition and goal is such that the mind quickly forms the habit of expecting each goal beforehand, and of taking a proportionate satisfaction in it when it arrives. This process of expectation and fulfillment links the successive beats together in an organism, which we may call the musical foot, after its analogy with the poetic foot.* So limited is the mental span that it is practically impossible for us to group more than three beats together in this way into a single organism; and all music consequently consists of combinations of either duple feet (one light beat followed by a heavy), or triple feet (two lights followed by a heavy) or complex arrangements of both sorts together. After this fundamental grouping of the time-elements is made, the mind instantly proceeds to recombine the groups into larger groups called phrases or sections. This it does by the same device of accentuation, either actual or ideal. It conceives one measure or foot as heavier or more

*The musical foot does not always correspond exactly with the "measure"; for the measure begins with the accent, while the foot often ends or culminates with the accent. The measure is marked off by the bar lines, but the foot sometimes spans the bar line.

significant than another, and so leaves one as a transition, to approach another as a goal. Thus groups of simple elements become themselves the compound elements of a larger synthesis, and the entire musical fabric gains definiteness and organization through the process of aroused and fulfilled expectation. Any metrical formula, like that of a bugle call, interrupted at any note before the last, gives us as vivid a sense of incompleteness as a statue with arms and legs broken off, or a ruined building, or a mutilated picture.

Metrical structure in music is thus, obviously enough, fairly analogous with metrical structure in verse, with its grouping of syllables into feet, of feet into verses, and of verses into couplets or stanzas. When we pass to the second sort of musical structure, however, which we may call tonal or harmonic structure, the parallel analogy with poetic rhyme is much less satisfactory. It is true that harmony and rhyme both act by presenting similar sounds at given points in the series of impressions; but harmony is a far more subtle, various, and potent organizing agent than rhyme. Harmony depends on the fact that the tones, or pitch

elements, used in music, can be distinguished into unrestful and restful, or into transitional and final, just as the metrical or time-elements are. In primitive music, in which but one tone sounded at a time, the matter was almost absurdly simple: high notes were unrestful, because they involved muscular tension;* low notes were restful, because they meant relaxation of vocal effort. Consequently, a descent of the voice meant a transition to a goal, and songs were divided off into sections by successive falls of the voice or cadences. The word "cadence," so important in musical terminology, preserves in itself the record of this phase of musical growth; from the Latin *cado*, to fall, it means primarily a sinking or lapsing, and hence, in general, a coming to rest.

As soon as two or more melodies were sounded together, however, the sense of rest following activity, the universal generator of design in a temporal series of impressions, could be produced in a far more subtle way. It could be produced by making the melodies pass through an inharmonious or dissonant chord or series of chords, to a harmonious one. As soon as dissonance

* It must be remembered that all primitive music was vocal.

came into general use, in other words, the sense of unrest, of impulsion toward something else, of progressive movement, that it imparted to music, was so potent that cadences could be made upward as well as downward; whenever dissonance resolved into consonance the effect of cadence ensued. And as dissonances are of all conceivable degrees of harshness, cadences could be made of any desired degree of finality. Moreover, as the tonal material of music grew more and more systematized, the feeling of key sprang up in men's minds; all music was felt to be in a certain key, that is, grouped about a certain tone, the centre and goal of all the others; and then cadences came to have even greater variety in the degree of finality they seemed to assert, dependent not only on the strength of the dissonances they followed, but also on the remoteness or nearness of their final chord to the keynote of the piece. All this meant greater and greater resources for building up music into complex and yet perfectly definite organisms; and as harmonic form constantly interacted more and more subtly with metrical form the capacities of design became practically infinite.

Lest the reader get lost in the maze of technical details, however, it will be well now to revert to the general principles underlying all these musical phenomena, and to sum up, before passing on, the essential points we have been trying to come at. Those arts which, like poetry and music, present their matter to us in a temporal series, depend for that organization of variety into unity which is beauty (and the *sine qua non* of all art) on the arousal in us of expectations, which are presently fulfilled. By first leading us to expect something, and then presenting it, they enable us to group our impressions, to feel that they are interrelated and mutually dependent, to get, in short, the sense of design or order. Music effects this by means of metrical and harmonic form, which act is the same way so far as they present unrestful, followed by restful, impressions, though in different ways so far as the technical basis of these impressions is concerned. Psychologically speaking, metrical and harmonic form coöperate to give music definite structure in our minds; to reclaim it from the condition of a mere sensuous or emotional stimulus, and engraft upon it the final and supreme beauty of order.

All absolute or pure music depends for its structure on these two great formative agents of metrical and harmonic design; but the mode of their application progressed from simplicity to comparative complexity as music evolved from the choral song of the sixteenth century, out of which it grew, to the modern sonata and symphony. It would be quite impossible to examine in detail, here, all the stages of that progress. Our effort must be rather to define three well-marked phases of the many-sided growth in general and summary terms, taking for granted, meanwhile, the minor variations and modifications which elude our somewhat rough analysis. These three phases have in common certain essential traits. In each we see music making up its elementary units of effect, out of unorganized tones, by the aid of metrical and harmonic form; in each we see it combining these units into complex designs by means of the principles of variated repetition of them. The difference between the phases is that in the later ones the units are larger and more definite, and are combined into broader, more complex organisms.

The first phase is that in which short musi-

cal “subjects,” called motifs, are made the elements of contrapuntal forms such as the canon, free prelude, invention, madrigal, and fugue. This phase, in which pure music makes its first appearance, emerging from the choral music which needed no musical principles of design because it took its shape and meaning from words, grew naturally out of the choral music which preceded it. Imagine any bit of melody springing into existence in connection with a verbal phrase or sentence; then fancy it sounded without the words which gave it reason for being: it is easy to see that the only way it can now be given significance is by being made the subject of a *musical* design, that is, by being repeated, either literally or in modified form. Even the most primitive savages have always felt this. In Sir Hubert Parry’s book on “The Evolution of the Art of Music” we find many examples of formulas of notes used by savages as motifs, and developed simply by endless repetition. Such formulas as the following, for example, become, by mere repetition, true music of a primitive type:

BEETHOVEN AND HIS FORERUNNERS

Figure VI.

MOTIF.



MOTIF.



From Parry's "Evolution of the Art of Music," p. 49.

The earliest attempts at pure music, though infinitely more advanced than these childish forms, were, like them, built up out of short motifs, of anywhere from two to a dozen tones, given definiteness by fixed metrical and harmonic relationships, and developed by means of repetition. All through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries such contrapuntal forms were being developed to a high pitch of perfection, and they reached their culmination in the great fugues of J. S. Bach (1685-1750). Let us, then, instead of poring painfully over the obscure steps by which this vantage-point in art was reached, make a brief analysis of the consummated fugue-form, as it was treated by this supreme master.

The fugue of Bach, as it is represented, for example, in the forty-eight fugues of his "Well-

Tempered Clavichord," is a contrapuntal or polyphonic form; that is, it is made up of from two to five voices or parts, progressing with complete melodic independence of one another, yet in entire harmony. It is based on, or proceeds out of, a short motif or subject, often but a measure or two in length, but subjected to the most ingenious, varied, and exhaustive manipulation. It has certain structural divisions, and always ends in the key in which it began; yet its form does not, strictly speaking, depend on its sectional structure, as is the case with the song, dance, and sonata forms, but rather on the logical exploitation of the motif. The motif, in a word, is the primary fact of the fugue, the seed from which is germinated all the luxuriant florescent life of the subsequent music.

Since the motif is the animating force of the entire fugue, it is obvious that upon its pointedness, variety, and interest will depend the vitality of the composition as a whole. Bach accordingly spares no pains in the construction of his motifs. Much as they differ in length, expression, and style, all are brimful of interest. Each embodies some striking

BEETHOVEN AND HIS FORERUNNERS

musical idea; some persuasive or emphatic rhythm, some definite tonal design which either by its oddness or by its utter naturalness and inevitability lays firm hold upon the attention at once, and coerces interest whenever it recurs. Here are a few motifs from the "Well-Tempered Clavichord":

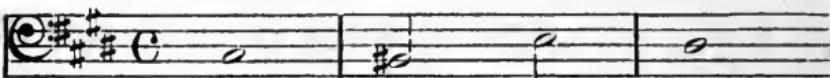
Fig. VII. Lento.



Andante con moto.



Moderato e maestoso.



Allegro.



Andante maestoso.



The variety is wonderful, even in these five subjects ; and it will be seen at once how provocative of musical thought they are, like condensed aphorisms, packed with suggestions that send the mind questing through endless vistas of imagination.

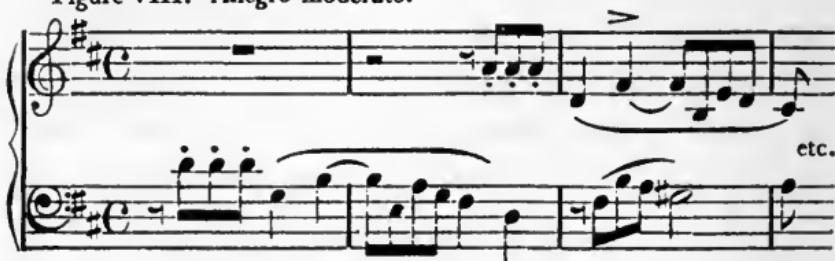
As for the further treatment of the fugal motif, the actual formal rules, despite the awe they have immemorially aroused in the popular mind, are few and simple. After the first announcement of the subject by a single voice, it is answered by a second voice, at an interval of a fifth above ; * then again stated by a third voice, and answered by a fourth. This process goes on until each voice has had a chance to enunciate the motif, after which the conversation goes on more freely ; the subject is announced in divers keys, by divers voices ; episodes, in a congruous style, vary the monotony ; at last the subject is emphatically asserted

* The reason of the “answer at the fifth” is this: the tonic and dominant being the two tonal centres of the key, about which all its sounds are grouped, it is natural that they should be treated as complementary to each other and made the bases of contrast effects. After the subject is announced in the tonic, then, it is answered in the dominant, or a fifth above (or a fourth below, which amounts to the same thing). See Figure VIII.

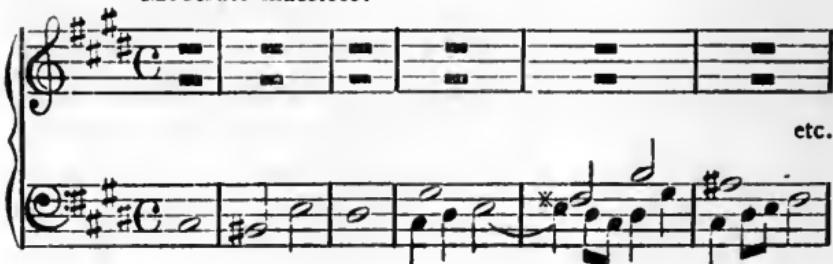
by the various voices in quick succession ("stretto") and with some little display or grandiloquence the piece comes to an end. But simple as is this scheme, it gives the composer ample opportunity to develop his theme with the utmost ingenuity, to subject it to the most surprising metamorphoses, and to place it in ever new lights and postures.

Practically all the possibilities of developing a motif were exploited by Bach in his marvelous fugues. The development of the motif means, in the most general terms, the repeti-

Figure VIII. *Allegro moderato.*



Moderato maëstoso.



tion of it in forms sufficiently like the original one to be recognizable, yet sufficiently unlike it to be novel and interesting, to exhibit it, as has just been said, in "new lights and postures." Now, since the identity of the motif depends on the fixed metrical and harmonic relations of its constituent tones, it is obvious that variation of it will have to consist in slight alterations of these metrical or of these harmonic relations, or of both, managed with such skill that they do in effect vary, without disintegrating, the motif. Our next task, then, will be to describe the chief means, both metrical and harmonic, by which the motif, in the hands of Bach and of all his successors, is modified without being destroyed.

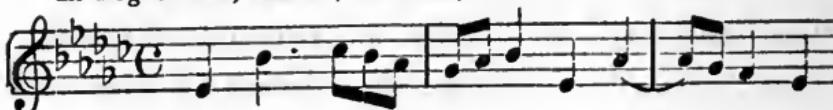
Mere repetition, of course, is not, strictly speaking, development, however efficient it may be as a means of building up musical structures. With the repetition of the motif at a different place in the scale, however, such as is used in the "answer," we have a true development, though an elementary one. Here all the metrical and harmonic relations of the motif are kept intact, at the same time that the bodily shifting of it in the scale throws upon it, so to

speak, a new light. This will be felt at once by any musical person who will play over attentively the two subjects and answers of Figure VIII. A much more radical change is effected when the motif is changed from major to minor, or vice versa, or presented in some key other than the dominant and more remote, or presented with new harmonization. Still, even in such cases, the metrical and fundamental harmonic form of the subject remains unaltered.

In the device called "inversion," much used by Bach, we have an essential change. The metrical form of the subject, remaining unchanged, ensures recognizability, but the harmonic relations, while remaining identical in respect of size, are exactly reversed in respect of direction; in other words, the subject is turned upside down. A few examples will explain this better than many words.

Figure IX. Examples of Inversion.

In Fugue VIII, Book I, W.-T.C.,



becomes



THE PRINCIPLES OF PURE MUSIC

In Fugue XX, Book I, W.-T.C.,



becomes



Many other examples might be given, for Bach is endlessly ingenious in his use of inversion, and all the composers who followed him have used it. Its effect, as will be seen from the examples, is most stimulating; the mind easily perceives the likeness to the original subject, since the rhythm is retained intact; yet the turning upside down of all the pitch relations produces most unexpected and interesting features.

So much for modifications dependent on altered tonal relationships. Those produced by metrical alterations are if anything even more serviceable to the composer. The simplest metrical change possible is produced by increasing or decreasing the actual duration of all the tones in the motif, while retaining jealously their proportionate duration. Thus the

identity of the motif is not tampered with, but it is made to bear a new relation to its musical context. This device is named augmentation or diminution, according as the time-values of the motif are augmented or diminished.

Figure X. Examples of Augmentation and Diminution.

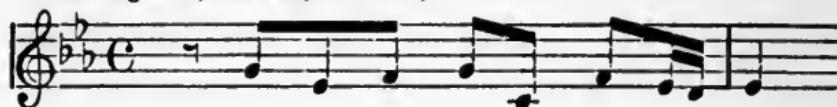
In Fugue VIII, Book I, W.-T.C.,



becomes by augmentation,

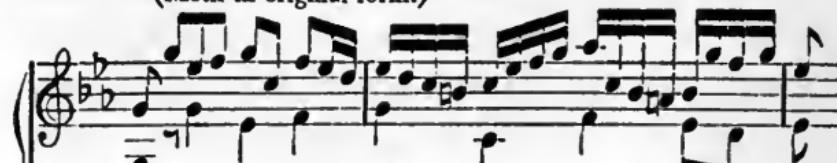


In Fugue II, Book II, W.-T.C.,

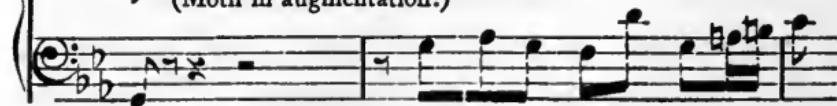


is treated as follows:

(Motif in original form.)

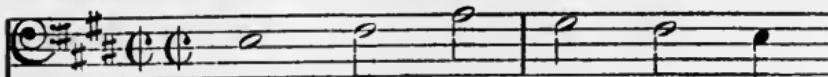


(Motif in augmentation.)

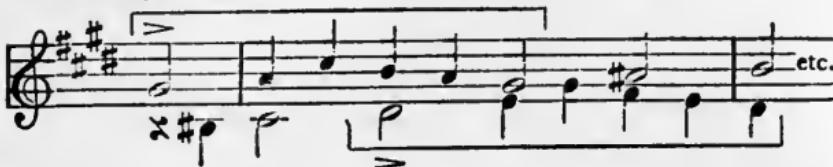


THE PRINCIPLES OF PURE MUSIC

In Fugue IX, Book II, W.-T.C.,



becomes by diminution,



It will be well worth the reader's while to play through the entire fugues cited, noting the marvelous skill and subtlety with which Bach weaves his fabric.

In augmentation and diminution the original accents of the motif are for the most part retained—it is only the durations that are altered. More transformative still, therefore, are those devices which actually shift the accents of the motif, its most salient and identifying features. The most important of these, which we may call “shifted rhythm,” is seldom found in Bach; for its frequent and exhaustive application we must look to Mozart, Beethoven, and Brahms. As its name indicates, “shifted rhythm” consists in bodily shifting or transposing the motif in such a manner that its heavy beats become light, and its light ones heavy. In order to

BEETHOVEN AND HIS FORERUNNERS

complete our account of the chief means of exploiting motifs, a few examples of shifted rhythm may find place here, even though they are not taken from Bach.

Figure XI. Examples of Shifted Rhythm.

From the Minuet of MOZART's String Quartet in C-major.



From the first movement of BEETHOVEN's Eighth Symphony.



From the first movement of BRAHMS's Second Symphony.



The foregoing discussion and examples will serve to give a slight idea of the wonderfully varied means of manipulating short motifs or musical subjects which composers derive from the peculiarities of metrical and harmonic organization. These means were utilized by Bach in the fugue with tireless industry and inexhaustible imagination. The fugue became in his hands the most perfect in its orderly complexity of all the forms of pure music; for sheer intellectual interest of a highly abstract kind his fugues have never been surpassed. Nor are they, as those unfamiliar with their intricacies are apt to suppose, devoid of emotional expression. The profundity, poignancy, and variety of the feeling they express are as marvelous as their consummate beauty of structure. They voice every mood, from the most earnest and impassioned gravity to the lightest banter. They are the first great independent monuments of pure music; and wherever future musicians may wander in the quest of new forms and new potencies of expression, Bach's fugues will always stand magnificent on the horizon, marking the unassailable eastern heights from which pilgrimage was begun.

It is true, nevertheless, not only that the fugue form makes the severest demands on the attention and intelligence of the listener, but also that, because of its ecclesiastical origin and polyphonic style, it is incapable of the kind of highly personal, secular expression that it was in the spirit of the seventeenth century to demand. The prototypes of secular expression are the popular dance and song, and as soon as learned musicians had discovered means to give to dance and song movements the completeness, breadth, and organic coherence requisite to large beauty, they began to turn their attention away from the austere if noble contrapuntal forms, and to base their art on more popular models. The result was that even in the age of Bach the suite of dance and song movements began to be cultivated almost as sedulously as the fugue, and Bach himself wrote suites which in their way are quite as good as his more polyphonic works. The second great phase in the application to pure music of the principles of metrical and harmonic design is represented by the Suite.

As practiced by Bach, the suite is a series of dances and songs, written in a style partly polyphonic and partly monodic (that is, consisting

of a single melody with subsidiary accompaniment). His introductory movements, allemandes in the French suites, preludes in the English, are stately or energetic contrapuntal pieces, intended to commence the suite with an impression of dignity. They are followed by courantes, bourrées, sarabandes, minuets, airs, and gavottes, all more or less definitely rhythmical and animated ; and the concluding movement is generally a rollicking gigue. These suites of Bach may be considered perfect models of the form.

Now, when we contrast the suite with the fugue, the first difference that strikes us is that while the fugue, of polyphonic and ecclesiastical origin, is not definitely rhythmical, but proceeds somewhat amblingly and without division into segments of definite duration, the suite movements, owing their origin as they do either to songs intended to be sung to verses of equal length, or to dances intended to accompany symmetrical motions of the body, are markedly rhythmical—are made up, in fact, of phrases of equal length, balancing one another and giving an impression of complete symmetry. A fugue proceeds like a prose sentence ; a gavotte or a

bourrée or a minuet sounds more like a stanza of verses. In short, the fundamental element in a dance or song is not a fragmentary motif, but a complete phrase, filling, as a rule, two measures, though sometimes four, eight, or even three or five. The phrase begins with a motif, but fills it out with additional matter rounded off by some kind of cadence. That the phrase is thus a more complex and extended unit than the motif, a few examples from Bach will make clear.

Figure XII. Examples of phrases.

Gavotte from BACH's Fifth French Suite.

Phrase 1.

Phrase 2.

etc.

THE PRINCIPLES OF PURE MUSIC

Bourrée, from BACH's Third Suite for 'cello.

Phrase 1.

Phrase 2.

etc.

It will be seen at once that in each case the second phrase answers or supplements the first. Like it in length and in general contour, it is at the same time more positive and final, so that the combined effect of the two is much like that of a couplet of verses. The first phrase, in fact, arouses in our minds an expectation, which only the second can satisfy; so that we have here a new and larger application of the now familiar device for binding together successive impressions. So characteristic is the

supplementation of one phrase by another that theorists have adopted a set terminology suggested by it, calling the first phrase in all such cases the "antecedent phrase," and the second the "consequent phrase." It will also be noted, however, that the pair of phrases, once heard, becomes itself a unit in the mind, and arouses a new expectation of further matter to establish a still larger balance; and a reference to the pieces of Bach cited will show that Bach in each case follows up his pair of two-measure phrases by a four-measure phrase which supplements them as they supplemented each other. And so the process goes on, the piece growing ever larger and more complex by a regular accretion, until at last a phrase of definite and entire finality is reached, and the movement stands complete. All short songs and dances illustrate this progressive accretion of phrases into larger and larger units, by means of a constant unfolding of new expectations and fulfilments. To trace it out, to analyse what the composer has so ingeniously built up, is one of the most fascinating of studies; for it shows us how the simplest song is organic like a crystal, a flower, or an animal.

It is neither possible nor desirable to lay down here any rigid rules as to the metrical or harmonic relationships between the phrases. Generally, the metrical balance is fairly simple; a two-measure phrase is usually answered by another of the same length; two such phrases are often answered by a single four-measure phrase. But sometimes four measures are answered by two; and not infrequently three- or five-measure phrases appear unexpectedly but with quite satisfactory effect. The sense of balance must be given—that is all we can say: just how it shall be given will depend, as Mr. Weller would say, “on the taste and fancy of the composer.” As for the harmonic relationships, endless variety is possible. Yet we may here point out certain general principles. Every phrase, as we have seen, ends with some sort of a cadence, strong or weak according to the harshness of the dissonance it contains and the nearness of its final chord to the tonal centre, or key-note, of the piece. Now, as the salient tones of any key are its tonic and its dominant, the most obvious and natural course for the composer is to embody these in the successive phrases; and as the tonic conveys the impres-

sion of finality it is natural to use that last. A glance at Figure XII will show that Bach makes his antecedent phrase, in the first instance, end with a tonic chord, but a weak one; in the second instance, with a dominant. In both cases the consequent phrase ends with a strong tonic. Thus the harmonic as well as the metrical relations produce the effect of expectation and fulfilment, of antithesis between a transitive and a final impression. This is the general principle of all harmonic structure. The final impression is given by a strong tonic chord; the mediate impression, arousing the sense of anticipation, is given by some weaker and contrasting harmony, in the vast majority of cases the dominant chord. A full sense of the inexhaustible capabilities of this sort of harmonic structure can be gained only by a careful analysis of many pieces such as the movements of Bach's suites. To this the reader is recommended.

When once composers had grasped the possibilities of structure by means of harmony, they quickly proceeded to work them out in the large, as applied to a complete musical form. They began to organize whole pieces by means

of a grouping or ordered antithesis of different harmonic centres. Working without models and in the dark, they made many false starts and wrong moves, they tried many hybrid and unstable forms; but eventually, in the course of years of experiment, they developed two great types of structure, based on fundamental principles, and embodied, with unimportant minor modifications, in almost all the suite-movements of the seventeenth and of later centuries. The first of these two great general types of structure, called Binary Form, contained two distinct members or sections; the second, called Ternary Form, contained three sections.

The essential principle of binary form is the simplest conceivable. Every piece in binary form may be likened to a journey to a neighboring place, followed by a return home. "The King of France, with forty thousand men, marched up the hill, and then marched down again." In the case of binary form, the king of France is the subject or theme of the piece; the forty thousand men are the variations or developments on this subject that are worked out as the piece proceeds; the hill is the progress from the tonic key to the contrasted tonal

centre, generally the dominant, or, if the piece is in a minor key, its relative major ; and the march down again is the return to the home key. More specifically, the first section begins with the announcement of the theme in the tonic key, and proceeds to ring changes upon it, meanwhile modulating to the contrasted key and ending with a firm and memorable cadence there. At this point the second section begins, with the theme as at first, but in the new instead of the original key ; the modulation is reversed, the original key reentered, and the same cadence already heard repeated, but now even more firmly, and with the added finality of the home key. The device is simplicity itself, yet it admits a surprising variety of detail within its perfectly obvious and satisfying unity of ultimate effect. Most of Bach's allemandes, courantes, airs, sarabandes, and gigues, are executed in binary form.

The great disadvantage of this admirably concise and organic structure proved in the course of experience to be a certain monotony and rigidity. As movements became longer and more complex, the division into two sections, embodying but two keys in spite of mo-

mentary excursions to more remote centres, came to seem rather constricting. There was a dearth of variety about it, and a tendency to obviousness. The element of contrast, of adventure far afield, was somewhat lacking. Composers accordingly worked out, of course unconsciously, a more various but equally organic scheme of design—ternary form. In ternary form the first section is practically identical with that of binary form; but the second, instead of “marching down again,” makes the contrasting tonal centre it has reached but a starting-point for still further excursions. It modulates freely, using to the utmost the privilege of admission to all the keys of the gamut that music owes to Bach and his system of equal temperament; it plays with the theme, subjecting it to the modes of development we have already studied; it indulges in all sorts of pranks and whimsies, departing as much as possible from the set formality of the first section; in a word, it endeavors to establish a complete contrast with what has gone before, and while never violating logic, to get away as far as possible from the beaten track, from the rut of routine. Then, after this interregnum of variety, comes the third

section with an emphatic reassertion of regularity, presenting once more the subject as at first, and in the tonic key, vindicating the unity of the movement of the whole, and rounding it out to orderly completeness. Splendid examples of this splendidly organic structure are most of the preludes, gavottes, bourrées, and minuets of Bach's suites.

In the suite, then, as it was practiced by Bach and other seventeenth-century composers, we see operative a constantly broadening application of the use of expectation and fulfilment, in the interests of organic structure. Applying to artistic music those methods of metrical and harmonic form that had long determined the growth of folk-song and dance, the composers of this period gradually learned to make even wider and more intricate syntheses of their materials. So skilfully did they avail themselves of the relations between contrasting harmonic centres that they were able eventually to write whole movements as firmly organic, as deftly coöordinated, as a vertebrate animal. By the ever-extending use of thematic variation and of free modulation, they made their pieces as various as they were systematic. And at last, in ternary

form, they established that succession of statement, contrast, and reassertion, which seems even to-day the last word in the philosophy of general musical structure.

The gradual expansion and increase of complexity in the movements of the suite, made not only possible but logically necessary by the structural potencies of these great principles of statement, contrast, and reassertion, and of antithesis of keys, led eventually to a new phase of musical structure, the third and last in the evolution we have been tracing. The suite, in the seventeenth century the most successfully cultivated of all the forms of pure music, gave place in the eighteenth century to a still higher form, the sonata, which has held the position of supremacy ever since. The sonata form is, not only by tradition but by natural right, the norm of modern musical structure. Almost all the chief works of all the great composers from Haydn and Mozart to Brahms and Tschaïkowsky are cast in this mould, as we easily realize if we remember that not only those pieces specifically named "sonatas," but also trios, quartets, quintets, and the like; and overtures and concertos and symphonies, are but pieces in

sonata-form intended for various groups of instruments. The string quartet is a sonata for two violins, a viola, and a 'cello; the concerto is a sonata for solo instrument with orchestral accompaniment; and the symphony is a sonata on a large scale, for orchestra. This remarkable prevalence of a single type of structure in modern music means far more than the accidental survival, by inertia, of an artificial convention; it means that this type of structure is on the whole the best possible embodiment of variety and unity in tonal effects; that it is the natural outgrowth of more primitive forms; and that it is elastic enough to admit into its uniform scheme of order the most diverse expressions of individual temperaments and ideals. Tschaïkowsky's intuition of beauty in tones is different enough from Haydn's; and the formal medium of which both can avail themselves without violence to their genius must obviously be founded deep in universal human psychology.

The modern sonata consists, as a rule, of four movements, contrasted in character and in key, but combining to form a rational and complete whole. In expression, the movements conform deftly to the natural requirements of human

nature. The first is energetic, vigorous, and complex. The second is sentimental, melancholy, noble, or profound. The third affords relief from the emotional concentration of the second; it is a dance, full of vivacity, humor, fantasy, and whimsical impulse; with Beethoven it becomes a consummate embodiment of the spirit of comedy, which is quite as essential a part of human nature as that of tragedy and earnest emotion. The fourth and last movement is again vigorous and dashing, but in a less intellectual way than the first; it ends the whole composition in a mood of simple and happy animation. As regards structure, moreover, the movements differ in conformity with the needs of the situation. The first, which is to be heard when the mind is most attentive and unfatigued, is by far the most complex,—is indeed often the only one in what is technically called “sonata-form.” The second, the interest of which is more emotional than intellectual, is usually of fairly primitive structure. The third, a dance, is in the simplest of ternary dance-forms, that of the minuet, and, as written by Haydn and Mozart, might almost be taken bodily out of a suite. The final move-

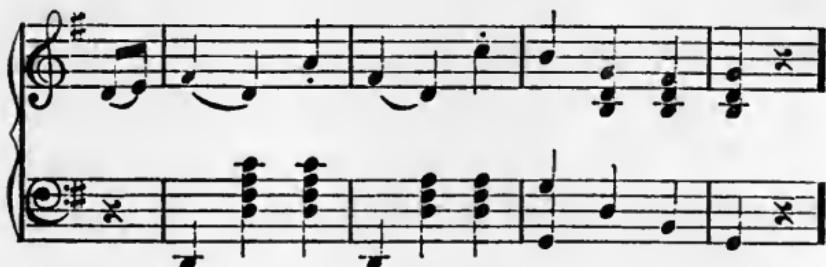
ment is also usually of simple, obvious structure.

It is clear, then, that of all the movements of the sonata, the minuet is the nearest, in structure, to those more primitive types embodied in the suite.* It makes a link bridging the gap between the older form and its more highly-developed supplanter. A glance at its construction will show how near it is to those simple ternary forms already described in connection with the suite. The symphonic minuet of Haydn is built up out of phrases, welded together in the manner now so familiar to us.

Figure XIII. Theme of Minuet, in HAYDN's "Surprise" Symphony.



* A still more primitive type of structure, occasionally but not uniformly used in symphonies and sonatas, is the variation form. This consists of a theme, generally in simple binary or ternary form, subjected to many successive modifications or "variations," generally of a superficial kind. Though low in the scale of musical organisms, it is surprisingly effective in the hands of real masters of musical development such as Beethoven and Brahms.



But there is a considerable increase in the subtlety with which the phrases are combined, in the "modelling," so to speak, of the melody. Greater variety is perceptible, the balance of the phrases is less obvious, while equally satisfactory. The structure, in the more extended sense, is ternary.* The first section of Haydn's Minuet, just cited, ends, after eighteen measures, in the dominant key. The second section, or section of contrast, contains some passages that are markedly different from the original theme, though congruous with it, and modulates so far afield as E-flat major (the home key being G). After twenty-two measures of this digression, the section of reassertion enters with the original theme in the tonic key, lasts twenty-two measures, and ends strongly in the home key. The minuet proper, as with Bach, is fol-

* This is the case with the Trio, or second Minuet, as well as with the Minuet proper.

lowed by a similar short piece, called the trio, put in for the sake of contrast. After it the minuet recurs; and it is an interesting fact that the whole movement is thus a large example of the same device of statement, contrast, and reassertion that is exemplified in its parts. In other words, the whole minuet is a "statement," the whole trio a "contrast," and the repeated minuet a "reassertion." We see here, then, the fundamental form which we described as ternary, and which may be symbolised by the letters A B A, utilized as a structural agent both in the individual parts, and in the whole of the movement. The symphonic minuet is quite obviously the child of the suite minuet, but a child approaching maturity, becoming complex and intricate in coördination.

The form generally adopted for the last movement of sonatas exemplifies a different way of utilizing the same general principles of design. As its name of "rondo" implies, it consists of a constant recurrence or "coming around" of the main thematic idea, which, as before, we may call A; but with several contrasting sections, instead of only one. The rondo type of structure may be symbolized by the letters A B A C A D A,

etc. It embodies, obviously enough, a greater variety than the simpler dance form out of which it grew, and at the same time preserves unity by the repetition of the main theme. It is less perfectly coöordinated, however, than the minuet; for as each episode occurs but once there is a deficiency of logic and of artistic economy; and as the principle of the form is sectional there is no intrinsic reason why it should not be prolonged indefinitely. It is, therefore, an essentially imperfect and indeterminate organism, although it is serviceable enough as the mould of a movement in which gaiety and general animation are more important than highly articulated plastic beauty.

The slow movement is of all the parts of the sonata the least uniform in structure. Often it is written in the primitive aria-form, identical with the minuet form; sometimes it is an adaptation of rondo form to the exigencies of deliberate movement and emotional eloquence; and not infrequently it is a modification of "first movement form," or sonata form proper. Its value depends but little on its structure, and almost entirely on its expressive qualities.

Of all the movements of the sonata, as has

already been said, the first, which comes when the listener is fresh and disposed to give minute and unflagging attention, is the most complex. First movement form, however, is but a further application of the simple principles of statement, contrast, and reassertion, and of contrast of keys, that are already operative, in an easily understood way, in the minuet, the aria, and the rondo. The first movement of a regular sonata begins with a first subject, or theme, in the tonic key, built, of course, upon a striking, individual, and memorable motif. After this has been well impressed upon the mind by a certain amount of repetition, either literal or modified, there is a formal transition to a contrasted key, generally the dominant, or, if the movement be in minor, the relative major, and a second subject enters, is in its turn well impressed upon the attention, and ends with an emphatic cadence or close in the contrasted key. This much makes up one complete section of the form. Historically, it is an out-growth of the first part of an ordinary small ternary form, by simple magnification of the elements, and increasing definition of and contrast between them. What was at first but an inconspicuous modulation becomes a formal

transition; and what was but a cadence in the contrasting key becomes a new subject, with its own individuality and function in the organism. And thus is built up the section of statement, with quite a high degree of complexity of its own. This is sometimes called the Exposition.

Next comes the "Free Fantasia" or "Working Out," the section of contrast, derived from the similar section in the minuet, but far longer and more intricate. In material it is a development, or manipulation, of the thematic germs stated in the exposition, by aid of all the devices for developing motifs that we have traced. Structurally, its function is to establish complete contrast, to do away with the impression of rigid system that the first section is likely to engender, and in every possible way to give variety, surprise, and interest to the musical tissue. It is accordingly absolutely free in modulation, un-systematic in arrangement, and irregular in metrical division. In it the composer gives rein to his fancy, obeys the impulse of the moment, and lets his ingenuity rather than his shaping instinct determine his progress. Yet the section of contrast is not a mere limbo of chaotic impulses. It must have its own logic, it must be

a true "development," it must be throughout obviously founded on the themes already stated. There is no part of the sonata-form in which all the composer's strength is more taxed than the Free Fantasia; here, indeed, freedom brings its own heavy responsibility.

After the contrast comes the reassertion, or "Reprise." Having displayed his materials in every light his imagination can suggest, and having meanwhile almost obliterated his hearer's sense of the key of the piece, the composer now carefully prepares to gather up all his flying threads, to stamp all this baffling variety with ultimate unity. Re-entering the home key, which has gained by its long silence a new power to delight and satisfy, he restates his two subjects or themes, in their original guise, but now both in the home key. As the essayist, after all his examples and figures and metaphors, returns to a bald, emphatic, final assertion of his thesis, the composer now, after all his playing with his ideas, reinstates them in more than their primitive simplicity.* To give them perfect finality he even reiterates them with fresh assertiveness,

* At first the second subject was in a contrasted key; now both subjects are in the tonic.

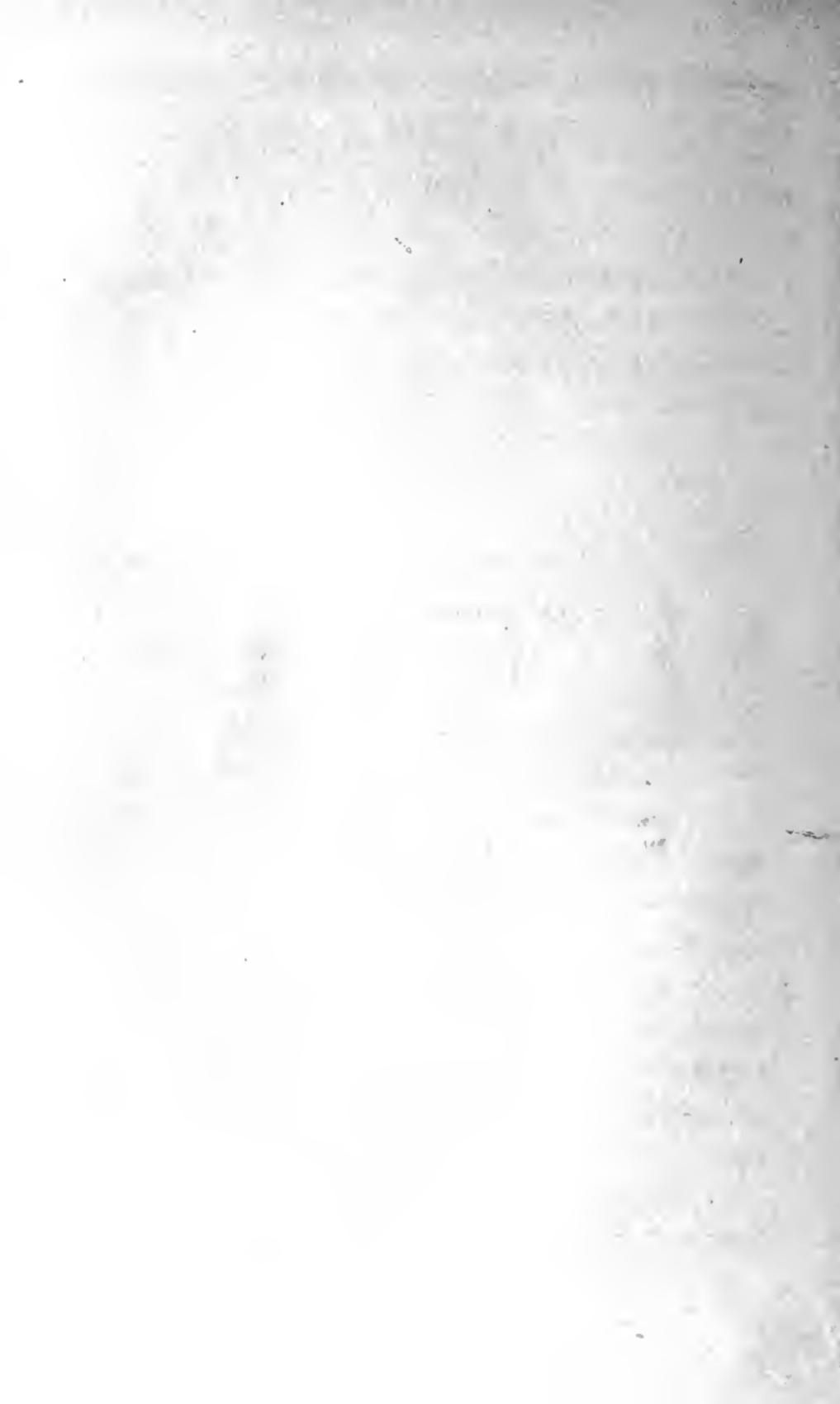
seems unwilling to leave them, and insists, in his Coda or tail-piece, that we take away with us a full sense of their import. Thus restatement, emphatic and prolonged, following upon contrast and digression, completes the unity of the whole composition, and closes the cycle to our satisfaction. It is impossible to conceive a type of musical structure which should better satisfy our demand for profusion of detail together with clarity of fundamental shape, than this highly perfected product of a long evolution, sonata-form.

It must not be supposed that this wonderful scheme of design reached its maturity in any short period of time, or through the labors of a few musicians. Infinitely slow and gradual was its growth; and though the immediate followers of J. S. Bach, and especially his own son, Philip Emmanuel Bach, brought it to a condition in which its general outline was pretty well established, it was still, at the time when Haydn appeared on the scene, incapable of that free manipulation which high musical beauty requires. It was Haydn who removed the last traces of stiffness and primitive angularity from the sonata-form; it was Haydn who brought it to complete definiteness as an artistic device and stamped it

BEETHOVEN AND HIS FORERUNNERS

with lasting individuality ; and it was Haydn who at least hinted and foreshadowed those subtleties and accommodations in its treatment which, as extended by Mozart and Beethoven, perfected its capabilities and brought it to its mature estate as the most vital, elastic and beautiful of modern musical forms.

C H A P T E R V
H A Y D N



CHAPTER V

HAYDN



I N the early eighteenth century there lived in a small village called Rohrau, situated near the Leitha River, which forms the boundary between Lower Austria and Hungary, a certain wheelwright and parish sexton, named Matthias Haydn, and his wife. They were simple peasant people, a little more educated than was usual with their class. Matthias Haydn, besides a smattering of general information, had a talent for harp-playing, though he could not read music. Frau Haydn's accomplishments ran in the direction of domestic management and religion ; and as she eventually found herself the mother of twelve children, she may be supposed to have stood in need of both. Franz Joseph Haydn, born

either on March 31 or April 1, 1732, was the second of these children. He was destined to create an epoch in the art of music.

How, in spite of his rather commonplace parentage and his heavy burden of poverty, he managed to develop so remarkable an artistic genius, has been a problem most puzzling to students; but much light has been thrown upon the whole matter by the recent investigations of a Croatian scholar, Dr. František Š. Kuhač, made accessible to readers of English by Mr. W. H. Hadow's "A Croatian Composer." These researches have shown that the whole region about Rohrau was inhabited by a largely Croatian or South Slavonic population; that Haydn himself was probably of Croatian heredity; and that at the very least his youth was spent among one of the most naturally musical of all races. "One in every three of the Croats," says Dr. Kuhač, "either sings, plays, or composes." "The men sing at their plows," says Mr. Hadow, "the girls sing as they fill their water-pots at the fountain; by every village inn you may hear the jingle of the tambura, and watch the dancers footing it on the green." Here, then, was an environment pre-

cisely suited to develop the qualities we shall observe in the mature Haydn ; and it helps to an understanding of almost every phase of his genius if we remember that as a boy he was surrounded, not by stolid German peasants, amiable but inexpressive, nor by a cultivated but unspontaneous aristocracy, but by a race of natural musicians, in whom dance and song were native and necessary modes of expression.

His formal musical education was less propitious. At the age of six he began the study of the violin, the harpsichord, and singing, under one Frankh, a distant relative, in the town of Hamburg ; but was so neglected and abused that in later years he was wont to say : “ From Frankh I got more cuffs than gingerbread.” He was probably glad enough when, two years later, he was able to go to Vienna as a choir-boy in St. Stephen’s Cathedral. Here he stayed ten years, half-starved, insufficiently clothed, and carelessly taught. Only his own indomitable energy enabled him to learn anything at all. He worked while the other choir-boys were at play ; he practiced indefatigably on his little clavier, which was so small and light that he could take it under his arm to a quiet place ;

he covered reams of music paper with his compositions, thinking that "it must be all right if the paper was nice and full;" he expended six of his father's hard-earned florins on ponderous text books of counterpoint and thoroughbass, and spent wakeful nights poring over them. Meanwhile his relations with the musical director in authority became more and more strained, until finally, in November, 1749, there was open rupture, and Haydn, seventeen years old, friendless, and without money, was turned into the street.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the hardships he now had to endure. By playing his violin at balls and weddings, by making arrangements of the compositions of amateurs for a pittance, by teaching—in a word, by any drudgery that anyone would pay for, he managed to keep himself from starving. And through it all, in his dimly-lighted, unheated attic, with roof so out of repair that snow and rain fell on the bed, and the water, of a winter morning, froze in the pitcher, he continued, as best he could, his own studies in composition. Years afterward he wrote of this period of his life, with his usual quaint piety: "I was forced for

eight whole years to gain a scanty livelihood by giving lessons; many a genius is ruined by this miserable mode of earning daily bread, as it leaves no time for study. I could never have accomplished even what I did if, in my zeal for composition, I had not pursued my studies through the night. . . . I offer up to Almighty God all eulogiums, for to Him alone do I owe them. My sole wish is neither to offend against my neighbor nor my gracious Prince, but above all our merciful God."

Although Haydn had at this time to endure humiliations and slights as well as actual want, his situation was gradually ameliorated by the patronage of some wealthy music-lovers with whom his growing reputation as a composer brought him acquainted. His first fixed post was that of music-director to a Bohemian nobleman, Count Morzin, for whose band he wrote, in 1759, his first symphony. In the next year, however, Count Morzin married and discontinued his musical establishment, and Haydn was left for a short time without definite work, until in 1761 he was installed in the post he held uninterruptedly for thirty years. His own marriage, meanwhile, took place in 1760.

How Haydn, who was quite as prudent as he was amiable, could have been so rash as to marry at just this moment, it is difficult to explain ; especially as he married, not the woman he had fallen in love with, but her elder sister. The whole affair is almost farcically perverse. A young composer of twenty-eight, just pulling himself up at length on the shelving bank of patronage, out of the slough of miscellaneous drudgery in which he has been weltering for years, offers to encumber himself at the critical moment with the daughter of one Keller, a barber. The lady, for unknown reasons, among which may or may not have been a dread of the quagmire, betakes herself to a nunnery. Whereupon the barber persuades the composer to marry the older daughter, Anna Maria. The outcome of this marriage, which took place in November, 1760, proved, as might have been expected, unfortunate. The wife began almost immediately to treat her husband with indifference and petty malignity, which rapidly increased. She seemed not to care whether he composed or cobbled, so long as he supplied her with money ; she used his manuscripts for curling-papers ; when he was in London in

1791 she wrote him appeals for money whereby to buy "a widow's home." Altogether the uncongeniality was intolerable, and the pair lived together but a few years, although Frau Haydn did not die until 1800.

The thirty years from 1761 to 1791, a period of the utmost importance in the development of Haydn's genius, was of the greatest monotony so far as events are concerned. His post was that of musical director or Kapellmeister (at first Vice-Kapellmeister), to the great, princely family of Esterhazy, one of the most wealthy and influential of the noble families of Hungary. He served them both at Eisenstadt, at the foot of the Leitha mountains, in Hungary, where Prince Paul Anton Esterhazy was the reigning prince in 1761, and at Esterhaz, the magnificent palace, with groves, grottoes, hot-houses, deer-parks, and flower gardens, which Prince Nicholas erected in 1766. Of the musician's duties and social status in this princely house, an idea may be gathered from the following sentences from the contract entered into at the beginning of his term of service as Vice-Kapellmeister :

"The said Joseph Hayden shall be considered and treated as a member of the household. There-

fore his Serene Highness is graciously pleased to place confidence in his conducting himself as becomes an honourable official of a princely house. He must be temperate, not showing himself overbearing towards his musicians, but mild and lenient, straightforward and composed. It is especially to be observed that when the orchestra shall be summoned to perform before company, the said Joseph Hayden shall take care that he and all members of his orchestra do follow the instructions given, and appear in white stockings, white linen, powdered, and either with a pig-tail or a tie-wig.

“ Seeing that the other musicians are referred for directions to the said Vice-Kapellmeister, therefore he should take the more care to conduct himself in an exemplary manner, abstaining from undue familiarity, and from vulgarity in eating, drinking and conversation, not dispensing with the respect due to him, but acting uprightly and influencing his subordinates to preserve such harmony as is becoming in them, remembering how displeasing the consequences of any discord or dispute would be to his Serene Highness.

“ The said Vice-Kapellmeister shall be under

an obligation to compose such music as his Serene Highness may command, and to retain it for the absolute use of his Highness, and not to compose anything for any other person without the knowledge and permission of his Highness.

“The said Vice-Kapellmeister shall take careful charge of all music and musical instruments, and shall be responsible for any injury that may occur to them from carelessness or neglect.”

The demands made upon “the said Joseph Hayden” were obviously severe; but he had in return many advantages. He was secure from want, a great consideration to one who had starved in garrets and sung in the streets and the cafés for his supper. He came in contact with many interesting people, both among the social and the professional guests of Esterhaz. Above all, he had a good orchestra at his command, and he was not only privileged, but obliged, to compose for it incessantly. Thus he was incited to constant study and experiment; so that before many years had elapsed he had become a thorough master of his medium, with the requisite technical skill to express any idea that his genius might suggest. It was largely during these years

that he poured out his endless series of master-pieces of chamber and orchestral music.

One result of all the work thus accomplished was that when, late in 1790, Prince Anton Esterhazy dismissed his entire corps of musicians, Haydn's reputation was so widespread that he was immediately solicited by one Salomon, a violinist and conductor, to make a trip to London. Hard as it must have been for him, at his age of nearly sixty, to exchange his studious habits for the fatigues and excitement of travel, the opportunity was too good to be lost; and late in 1790 he set out with Salomon, reaching London early in the next year.

In reading of this visit to England, as well as of the second one which Haydn made three years later, one hardly knows whether to be more impressed by the fame and prosperity which came to him from all sides, or by the homely simplicity with which he received them. This quiet, precise, pious old kapellmeister was the object of the most flattering attentions from everyone in London; he was half worshipped by the ladies, he was feted by noble families, he was the guest of the Prince of Wales. His works were awaited with impatience and received with enthusiasm;

he was honored with the Degree of Doctor of Music by Oxford University ; his pockets were filled with enough English gold to buy him German soup for the rest of his life. Yet he was almost as much overwhelmed as delighted with all this unwonted excitement. With a characteristic mixture of homeliness and piety he wrote to his friend Frau von Genzinger : " Oh ! how often do I long to be beside you at the piano, even for a quarter of an hour, and then to have some good German soup. But we cannot have everything in this world. May God only vouchsafe to grant me the health that I have hitherto enjoyed, and may I preserve it by good conduct and out of gratitude to the Almighty ! "

His English notebook reveals the same child-like attitude, mingled with an interest in details and statistics curiously characteristic of his matter-of-fact mind. Here are a few typical entries :

" The national debt of England is estimated to be over two hundred millions. Once it was calculated that if it were desired to pay the debt in silver, the wagons that would bring it, close together, would reach from London to York (two hundred miles), each wagon carrying £6,000."

“The city of London consumes annually 800,000 cartloads of coal. Each cart holds thirteen bags, each bag two Metzen. Most of the coal comes from Newcastle. Often 200 vessels laden with coal arrive at the same time. A cartload costs 2½ pounds.”

“Beginning of May, 1792, Lord Barrymore gave a ball that cost 5,000 guineas. He paid 1,000 guineas for 1,000 peaches ; 2,000 baskets of gooseberries cost 5 shillings apiece.”

“On the 14th of December I dined at the house of Mr. Shaw. While I was bowing all round I suddenly perceived that the lady of the house, besides her daughters and the other ladies, wore on their head-dresses a pearl-colored band, of three fingers breadth, embroidered in gold with the name of Haydn, and Mr. Shaw wore the name on the two ends of his collar in the finest steel beads. N. B.—Mr. Shaw wanted me to give him a souvenir, and I gave him a tobacco-box which I had just bought for a guinea. He gave me his in exchange.”

The last sentence is particularly delicious for its revelation of Haydn’s usual canniness. Not even his enjoyment of fame could make him forget that the tobacco-box given away had cost

him a guinea ; but he is solaced by the thought that he had got another in return. One is reminded of the same trait in reading his comment on the high prices of race-horses :

“ These horses are very dear. Prince Wallis a few years ago paid 8 thousand pounds for one, and sold it again for 6 thousand pounds. But at the first race he won with it 50,000 pounds.”

The entire diary exhibits a similar thriftiness, shrewdness, and practicality ; by impressing the reader with the curiously prosaic and matter-of-fact quality of Haydn’s mind, it throws as much light on the essential character of his music as on that of his personality. Fancy Beethoven, or any other speculative, imaginative mind, going to see Dr. Herschel’s great telescope, looking through it at the stars, and then carefully recording in his journal : “ It is forty feet long and five feet in diameter ” !

One of the interesting revelations made by Haydn’s note-book is that of his sentimental attachment to a certain Mistress Shroeter. It is a charming and in a way a pathetic story ; the beginning formal, the continuation touchingly human in spite of the old-fashioned phrases in which it reaches us, and the end

mysterious. Mistress Shroeter, a widow, relict of a German musician, begins it in the following note, copied out carefully, together with all the subsequent ones, by Haydn :

“ Mrs. Shroeter presents her compliments to Mr. Haydn, and informs him she is just returned to town and will be very happy to see him whenever it is convenient to him to give her a lesson. James St., Buckingham Gate, Wednesday, June the 29th, 1791.”

The lessons thus begun continued all through the period of the composer’s first London visit, and the correspondence soon begins to reveal a growing attachment between the lonely, unhappily married Haydn and, in his own simple words, “ the English widow in London who loved me.” The letters, quaint, formal, tender, are couched in the vocabulary of “ Evelina ” and “ Clarissa Harlowe ; ” their “ fair author, ” as one feels impelled to call her, might have been, with her funny little abbreviations, her odd admixture of grandiloquence and impulsive feeling, and her constant underscoring of unimportant words, Clarissa herself. A note of April 12, 1792, will perhaps sufficiently show her way of writing :

“ M. D. [My dear.] I am so *truly anxious* about *you*. I must write to beg to know *how you do?* I was very sorry I *had* not the pleasure of Seeing you this Evening, my thoughts have been *constantly* with you and indeed my D. L. [dear love], no words can express half the tenderness and *affection I feel for you*. I thought you seemed out of spirits this morning. I wish I could always remove every trouble from your mind. be assured my D: I partake with the most perfect sympathy in *all your sensations* and my regard for you is *Stronger every day*. my best wishes attend you and I am ever my D. H. [dear Haydn] most sincerely your Faithful, etc.”

Thus tenderly and innocently the friendship progresses, with constant protestations of regard, with continual solicitude to know “*how you do*” and “whether you have *Slept well*,” with little discreet panegyrics over “*your sweet compositions and your excellent performance*,” and with many fears “*lest you fatigue yourself with such close application*”; until, with Haydn’s departure for home, it suddenly and abruptly closes, never to be resumed. Did these two meet again when Haydn returned to London

in 1794? Did the letters recommence? We do not know. The story ends with a letter of Mistress Shroeter's, written just before Haydn's departure in 1792, beginning with the hope that he has "Slept well," and ending with a protestation of "inviolable attachment."

After his second trip to London was over, Haydn returned to Austria, dividing his time between Vienna and Esterhaz, where he was again made music-director. Getting now to be an old man, he lived quietly, making few public appearances. He composed at this time his famous Austrian National Hymn, as well as his two oratorios, "The Creation" and "The Seasons," produced respectively in 1798 and in 1801. In 1803 he made his final appearance as a conductor, and in 1808 he appeared in public for the last time. The occasion was a performance of "The Creation." "All the great artists of Vienna were present," says Mr. Hadden, "among them Beethoven and Hummel. Prince Esterhazy had sent his carriage to bring the veteran to the hall, and as he was being conveyed in an arm-chair to a place among the princes and nobles, the whole audience rose to their feet in testimony of their re-

gard. It was a cold night, and ladies sitting near swathed him in their costly wraps and lace shawls. The concert began, and the audience was hushed to silence. When that magnificent passage was reached, 'And there was light,' they burst into loud applause, and Haydn, overcome with excitement, exclaimed: 'Not I, but a Power from above created that.' The performance went on, but it proved too much for the old man, and friends arranged to take him home at the end of the first part. As he was being carried out, some of the highest in the land crowded round to take what was felt to be a last farewell; and Beethoven bent down and fervently kissed his hand and forehead. Having reached the door, Haydn asked his bearers to pause and turn him towards the orchestra. Then, lifting his hand, as if in the act of blessing, he was borne out into the night."

Near the end of May, 1809, Haydn began to fail rapidly. On the twenty-sixth, gathering his household and having himself carried to the piano, he played over three times his "Emperor's Hymn," with great emotion. Five days later he died. The curious admixture of kind-

liness and practical good sense which give to Haydn's character such an individual charm appear even in his will, a long and detailed document very precisely drawn up. He bequeaths "To poor blind Adam in Eisenstadt, 24 florins"; "To my gracious Prince, my gold Parisian medal and the letter that accompanied it, with a humble request to grant them a place in the museum at Forchtenstein"; "To Fräulein Bucholz, 100 florins. Inasmuch as in my youth her grandfather lent me 150 florins when I greatly needed them, which, however, I repaid fifty years ago." After many other bequests he concludes; "I commend my soul to my all-merciful Creator; my body I wish to be interred, according to the Roman Catholic forms, in consecrated ground."

In personal appearance Haydn was an odd mixture of the ordinary and the unusual, of commonplaceness and distinction. The complexion, marked with small-pox, was so dark that he was sometimes called "The Moor"; the nose was strong but heavy; the lower lip thick and projecting; the jowl square and massive. Yet his dark gray eyes were said to "beam with benevolence," and Lavater, the great physiognomist,

perceived in his eyes and nose "something out of the common," while dismissing the mouth and chin as Philistine. Of himself Haydn said: "Any-one can see by the look of me that I am a good-natured sort of fellow"; yet he confessed that the ladies, who generally found him interesting, were "at any rate not tempted by my beauty."

The explanation of these apparent contradictions is to be found in the peculiar make-up of that individuality of which the external appearance was an index. That mixture of heavy jowl and penetrative eyes bespoke the combination of a certain rudeness, primitiveness, commonplaceness of emotional nature, with rare intellectual vivacity and acumen. We have already remarked the prosaic attitude of Haydn towards men and things, as well as the purely intellectual alertness with which he observed them. His vision of the world was more that of an accountant or statistician than that of a poet. He saw simply and clearly; for him objects stood in the hard light of reason, not surrounded by any haze of reverie or atmosphere of emotion. His mental efficiency is especially striking when we consider the natural disadvantages under which it labored. Haydn was distinctly an uneducated

man. The son of a wheelwright, in a petty Austrian village, he had little schooling, little early contact with men and women, little commerce with all the indefinable influences that make for cultivation of the rarer powers of intellect and spirit. He knew Italian and a little French, but never had any English until he went to London at nearly sixty. He read little, and did not care to discuss politics, science, or any art but music. He spoke always in the strong dialect of his native place. Yet by force of sheer intelligence and ability he established the art of music on a new basis. Those penetrating gray eyes saw much that was hidden from men far more happily born, far more delicately nurtured.

On the other hand, the impressive peculiarity of his emotional nature is its normality. Emotionally he was typical rather than personal, centred in the common interests and instincts rather than eccentric to them, conservative and conventional rather than radical and individual. This is doubtless the meaning of that somewhat stolid jaw, that firm and vigorous, but rather insensitive mouth, that sane but unimaginative configuration of the whole lower face, the expressive seat of the will and the feelings. Beethoven is

interesting largely for his departure from the average human norm, his highly developed selfhood, his inexorable individuality ; Haydn, on the contrary, compels our study just because he is so like other men, so amply representative of them within their own limitations. The traits that stand out in him are traits "in widest commonalty spread" ; a brisk and busy vivacity, finding itself much at home in this world, with plenty to do and to inquire into ; connected with that, a half-childlike shrewdness in affairs, a canny ability to take care of himself, practical talent, worldly skill ; on a higher plane, a sunny kindness and good cheer that make him one of the most genial of men, a kind of simple human warmth and happiness and joy ; finally, on the highest plane of all, though but a projection of the human cheer, an ardent piety, a whole-hearted faith in God, an earnest and yet quite simple religious devotion. These are traits not exclusively Haydnish, so to speak, as mystical devotion and resolute idealism are Beethovenish, but common to all humanity.

Now, these two fundamental qualities of Haydn's nature as a man, his emotional normality and his mental efficiency, deserve the

especial attention we have been giving them, not only on account of their intrinsic human interest, but also because they determined the quality of his work as a musician. His wide sympathy with ordinary men, his practical sense and shrewdness, his brisk good cheer, his child-like and wholly unmetaphysical piety—all these traits made his music, in its expressive aspect, far more catholic, far more universal, than the austere and ethereal music of mysticism. At the same time, his practical and systematic mind took firm grasp upon these novel elements of expression, and wrought them into a clear and easily comprehensible scheme. He stamped the naïve and fragmentary utterances of folk-feeling with the careful, purposeful orderliness of art; and by so doing, launched music upon a new period of development.

In both his great tasks, the secularization of expression and the systematization of form, Haydn's personal faculties were reënforced by the general musical conditions of his time. At the end of the eighteenth century the mystical type of expression in music had not only arrived at its acme in Palestrina's work, after which it must inevitably decline, but it had

ceased to be an adequate reflection of the general human attitude toward life. Men had turned away from contemplating the mysteries of divinity, to interest themselves more than ever before in the commonest feelings, the universal experiences, of ordinary human beings. They had discovered the miraculousness of the commonplace, and learned to respect themselves. And they had consequently begun to prize as genuine self-expressions those upwellings of naïve emotion, the songs and dances of the people, which had been so long contemptuously ignored by academic musicians. These folksongs had none of the limitations of the more dignified, recognized art, which paid the price of its dignity in a sacrifice of fullness of expression. They voiced not only what was edifying, what was devout and mystical and other-worldly. They palpitated with simple human feeling, very much of this world ; they were tender, animated, melancholy, languorous, excited, merry, amorous, even trivial, dull, or indecent at times, as human beings are. They were in fact the crude but genuine expression of that full, simple, unrestricted humanity to which idealism had begun to pin its faith.

The musicians of the seventeenth century, instinctively aware that folk-music somehow succeeded in voicing a wider arc of the full circle of feeling than the conventional ecclesiastical art, applied themselves with enthusiasm to the endeavor to assimilate and idealize it, to turn the current of its pulsing blood into the torpid veins of academic music, at the same time refining its crudities and broadening its proportions. The result of their effort was the suite, or series of dances and songs, the most popular and prevalent authorized form of that century. The suite was, indeed, in its degree a successful embodiment of folk-types of expression in a form broad and dignified enough to satisfy æsthetic demands. But it was not capable of extended growth. The shortness of its movements, their over-obvious scheme of phrase-balance, their uniformity of key, rendered impossible any great increase in complexity of form. Composers therefore found themselves in a dilemma: they were compelled to write either in the old polyphonic style, which labored under insurmountable limitations of expression, or in the new harmonic style, which was as yet capable only of a rudimentary scheme of form, and

therefore unsatisfactory to the sense of plastic interest and beauty.

It was at this auspicious moment that Haydn, equipped, as we have seen, with an affectionate and sympathetic heart, beating in unison with that of common humanity, and with a lucid, practical, pedestrian mind, well-fitted to disentangle and arrange in order the factors of a complex problem, appeared in the arena. The adjustment between his nature and his circumstances was thus peculiarly complete. He found in the folk-music of his native place, to begin with, a type of emotional expression with which he was, both as regards qualities and limitations, in complete sympathy. "The Croatian melodies," says Mr. W. H. Hadow, "are bright, sensitive, piquant, but they seldom rise to any high level of dignity or earnestness. They belong to a temper which is marked rather by feeling and imagination than by any sustained breadth of thought, and hence, while they enrich their own field of art with great beauty, there are certain frontiers which they rarely cross, and from which, if crossed, they soon return." Could any better short description be devised of Haydn's own characteristic vein of sentiment

—“bright, sensitive, piquant, but seldom rising to any high level of dignity or earnestness”? His music is, in fact, from the point of view of expression, essentially an expansion, development, and idealization of the characteristic utterance of his race.

On the other hand, he had the mental grasp necessary to organize all this crude, inchoate, fragmentary material into the finished and coherent forms of art. It is a long step from even the most eloquent expressions of single aspects of feeling, in short songs and dances, to an extended composition in which moods are co-ordinated and contrasted, proportions fitly ordered, and unity combined with broad scope—a step which only intelligence can make. The technical task which faced the musicians of the day was to find a scheme of musical form that should knit the accents of the popular speech, in themselves poignant and thrilling but disjointed, fragmentary, halting, into a fluent and rational utterance. Sir Hubert Parry explains the situation as follows: “What Haydn had to build upon, and what was most congenial to him through his origin and circumstances, was the native people’s songs and dances, which be-

long to the same order of art in point of structure as symphonies and sonatas; and what he wanted, and what all men who aimed in the same direction wanted, was to know how to make this kind of music on a grander scale. The older music of Handel and Bach leaned too much towards the style of the choral music and organ music of the church to serve him as a model. For the principle upon which their art was mainly built was the treatment of the separate parts. In the modern style the artistic principle upon which music is mainly based is the treatment of harmonies and keys, and the way in which those harmonies and keys are arranged. In national dances few harmonies are used, but they are arranged on the same principles as the harmonies of a sonata or a symphony; and what had to be found out in order to make grand instrumental works was how to arrange many more harmonies with the same effect of unity as is obtained on a small scale in dances and national songs.") Here again, happily, the historic moment was favorable to Haydn. Many tentative efforts toward a new method of musical structure, based on an organized contrast of themes and keys, had been made;

and all that was needed to weld them into a style as firm and clear as it was novel and interesting was systematization by an orderly, responsible, and efficient mind. Haydn had such a mind ; and he established sonata-form on a permanent basis.

In this great task he was helped by study of the experiments in the new or secular music already made by such men as Carl Philip Emanuel Bach,* a son of the great Sebastian, who struck into paths very different from the contrapuntal ones of his father ; he was helped by the intrinsic principles of structure of the songs and dances themselves, which made up his musical material ; but above all he was helped by the bias of his own mind, practical and business-like. It hardly needs demonstration that in the initiatory period of an art-form the chief desideratum is clearness, simplicity, a clean, concise treatment which subordinates all details to the salient features of the construc-

* Haydn on C. P. E. Bach : "Those who know me well must be aware that I owe very much to Emanuel Bach, whose works I understand and have thoroughly studied." C. P. E. Bach on Haydn : "He alone has thoroughly comprehended my works, and made a proper use of them."

tion, and foregoes variety rather than endanger unity. Haydn's temperamental make-up, the almost child-like directness of his intellect, ensured his fitting treatment of an art itself just emerging from infancy.]

The procedure of Haydn, then, in his treatment of the problems of form, or the shaping of his material, was chiefly notable for simplicity, directness, shrewd adaptation of means to ends. He was not a lover of the subtle, the recondite ; he went straight to his mark, economized his resources, prized ready intelligibility beyond all other qualities. This appears, first, in his initial motifs or melodic germs ; and second in his methods of building them up into larger artistic organisms. Look at the motifs of his " Surprise Symphony," for example, noting their metrical vigor and their harmonic simplicity, particularly in the two middle movements. The meter of the Andante is the baldest combination of eighth-notes and quarter-notes, like that of the tunes children pick out on the piano ; its harmony is tonic, sub-dominant, dominant, tonic again, and the inevitable modulation to the dominant, and so on. The Minuet is a rollicking, waltz-like tune, seesawing happily about from

tonic to dominant, with some simple modulations for variety's sake. Haydn wrote thousands of such motifs, all vigorous, incisive, and utterly simple.

When we pass from considering the texture or molecular tissue of the music to an examination of its structure, or composition, the same qualities continue to impress us. There is a constant dearth of contrast, a constant simplicity that to modern ears, it may be, seems like over-simplicity. The motifs, for example, are generally expanded into complete phrases by the addition of more or less homogeneous or amorphous matter, rather than by the entrance of new motifs or figures, such as Mozart often, and Beethoven generally, uses. The schemes of balance between the phrases are generally obvious and mathematically exact, four measures answering four, or eight, eight; whereas in Beethoven, and even in Mozart, the phrase-balance is much more subtle and various. The transitional passages leading from one theme to another are so perfunctory, so conventional, that Wagner felicitously compared them to "the clattering of dishes at a royal feast." The themes themselves, too, are often but slightly contrasted in character and

style; instead of setting a dreamy or emotional second theme over against a sprightly or dashing first theme, Haydn is apt to make the second hardly more than a variation of the first. In the development portions of his first movements, again, where the logical power and ingenuity of the composer is of course most sorely taxed, Haydn is apt to resort to only the more obvious means of exploiting his subjects, to represent them literally, with merely a new figure of accompaniment, or to change a major theme to minor, or vice versa, instead of drawing forth their latent but at first sight hidden possibilities. He avoids radical transformations, either of harmony or rhythm. To put the matter in the most general terms, he is more spontaneous than thoughtful, more vivacious than logical, more bent on securing perfect transparency for his tonal web than on filling it with iridescent colors, tempting opacities, charming labyrinths of light and shade. We must remember, however, that Haydn was writing for people to whom the whole scheme of thematic form was unfamiliar. His ingenuity was taxed to be as regular as possible, rather than to introduce attractive irregularities. He was, in fact, laying down the first principles

of a novel type of art; and it is the supreme virtue of first principles to be simple, fundamental, unmistakable.

Our interest in defining Haydn's general artistic function as that of a pioneer, a systematizer and law-giver, must not blind our eyes, however, to his strokes of originality. In an occasional daring modulation, happy irregularity, or nicely-calculated blurring of outline, Haydn anticipates some of Beethoven's most characteristic effects. In the Minuet of his Ninth Symphony,* for example, there are some charming instances of "shifted rhythm"; and in that of the Eighth he revels in odd rhythmical surprises with a truly Beethoven-like elfishness. As for the matter of harmonic ingenuity, the instances are bewilderingly numerous. Two or three of the most striking may, however, be mentioned, and the rest left to the reader's own research. In the introduction of the Third Symphony, in E-flat, Haydn makes a most interesting enharmonic change from C-flat to B-natural, quite in the Beethoven manner, plunging the hearer into a mystification that clears up only with the re-

* The numbering here refers only to the twelve great symphonies written for Salomon.

turn, after a few measures, to the key of C-minor, the relative of the original key. The Introduction of the Fifth Symphony contains similar ingenious modulations. But the most Beethovenish trick of all is perhaps the modulation back to the last entrance of the main theme of the Finale of this same symphony. The key of the movement is D-major; Haydn, however, getting himself well established in F-sharp minor, harps on C-sharp as the dominant of this distant key; many C-sharps are heard, in a persistent rhythm of two shorts and a long, until one has forgotten all about the original key of the piece; the C-sharps fade away to piano, then to pianissimo, then to silence; when suddenly, in the same rhythm, three loud D's bring the piece emphatically back to the home key, and forthwith it proceeds merrily upon its way. This device is surprisingly unlike Haydn in his usual jog-trot mood; it is amazingly like the daring strokes of his great successor. The C-sharp is drummed into us until we take it for granted, and conceive it wholly as the dominant of F-sharp-minor; and then by his sudden blast of D's the composer shows us that he had after all decided to consider it the lead-

ing-note of the home key—and therewith, home we are!

But in spite of some striking anticipations of later effects, Haydn is for the most part, and in the long run, a true child of his own epoch, writing with its concern for clearness of form, its somewhat gingerly treatment of contrast, its quaint, old-fashioned, and yet awakened spirit. He assimilated the best capacities of music as he found them, and by dint of his skill and perseverance, moulded them until they issued forth in what was to all intents and purposes a new art. But the novelty in this art was not the novelty of a new vision, a new character, a new personal ideal; it was the novelty of a more perfect adjustment than had yet been achieved of expressive impulses and formal principles already widely disseminated. Haydn's great achievement was the development of popular types of expression into a true art by the application to them of schemes of design, or form, which in his day had just become possible for the first time as a result of the pioneer work in harmonic and rhythmic organization done by his immediate predecessors. Lacking either of these two constituents, Haydn's art could not have existed; and coming into be-

ing as a resultant of both, it had qualities of its own, different from those of either one of its factors alone. It marked, indeed, the beginning of secular music as a mature art.

The final emphasis in any definition of Haydn's qualities, whether of expression or of form, depends on the point of view from which it is made, on whether he is considered as a follower of Palestrina or as a forerunner of Beethoven. In comparison with Palestrina he is a modern. In common with his immediate predecessors, but more fully and definitely than any of them, he turns away from the ecclesiastical inspiration and the contrapuntal forms of the sixteenth century, to establish himself solidly on the untrammelled expression of universal human feeling, through forms based on harmonic and rhythmic principles. He sacrifices the dignity, the peace, the detachment, of Palestrina, in order to voice the self-consciousness, the mobile vitality, the turbulence and struggle and ebullient life of the modern man. For this reason, as well as because of the forms he uses, he is "the first of secular composers," "the father of instrumental music." Yet he is not free as Beethoven is free, nor is his individualism the fierce nonconformity of the

great anarch of outworn conventions and restricting formulæ. His methods, compared with Beethoven's, are rigid, narrow, inelastic ; the music they shaped had something of the angular outline of all childlike art. Had it not been for their regularity, however, Beethoven's felicitous daring would have miscarried ; without their order as a point of departure, his "splendid experiments" would have led, not to freedom, but to chaos. Mozart's playful nickname of "Papa Haydn" is more than a term of endearment ; it is a condensed philosophy. Haydn was indeed the father of instrumental composers, in this sense : that he laid the foundation for all their performance, and that they made the advances, in the light of which he appears old-fashioned, only by a wise use of resources inherited from him.

CHAPTER VI
MOZART





CHAPTER VI

MOZART



ALTHOUGH Mozart, born twenty-four years later than Haydn, and therefore belonging to another generation, was under heavy obligations to his forerunner for technical resources and models of style, his disadvantage in years was so much more than cancelled by the superior brightness of his genius that he in his turn was able to exert a potent influence upon the older man. The two great predecessors of Beethoven, accordingly, can be understood only when they are considered as subject to mutual influences, as supplementing each other through a delicate play of action and reaction. Haydn led the way into the *terra incognita*, did the rough work of clearing the ground, but it was Mozart who turned the wilderness into a garden. The chief

dates of the two careers indicate concisely their interaction. Haydn was born in 1732, Mozart in 1756; yet Haydn, although he began writing symphonies as early as 1759, when Mozart was but four years old, wrote none that can compare with the younger man's until 1791, or after Mozart had written his three great symphonies of 1788. As with the symphony, so it was with the string quartet. Haydn opened up the way, but Mozart, outrunning him, became eventually the leader. It was a sort of hare and tortoise race in which, to the confusion of morality, the hare won.

Both circumstances and endowment fitted Mozart, in this case, for the rôle of hare. The son of a professional musician, who wisely directed his early studies, and opened to him in his impressionable years all the advantages of companionship with musicians and with people of general cultivation, he came by good fortune into immediate possession of all the favoring conditions that Haydn had to struggle up to through years of poverty, neglect, and hard labor. It would be hard to imagine more dissimilar lots in life. The contrast between the two men thus externally induced was accentu-

ated by their opposite characters. Haydn, as we have seen, was an intensely human person, full of sympathy for the ordinary and yet always appealing emotions of common humanity, and looking at music largely as a means for their expression. Mozart, on the contrary, was an artist pure and simple. His genius was almost completely independent of his character, and it was by virtue of the former that he was great. His sensitiveness to the minutest distinctions and gradations in sound, his unerring instinct for perfection in form, in the smallest as in the largest instances, his wonderful power to shape a multitude of details into a breathing organism, his Greek serenity of temper and indifference to ranges of feeling that might perturb his art—all these things gave him an incalculable advantage over the plodding Haydn as a master of the purely artistic side of musical composition. They enabled him to assimilate instantaneously all that the older man had to teach him of design, and to become his teacher before he had done with learning from him. Haydn showed Mozart how to do things; and in return Mozart showed Haydn how to do them better.

Both men were clearly aware of their obligations to each other. In the midst of the petty jealousies and the malicious efforts to stir up ill-feeling which characterized musical Vienna in their day, they remained warm friends and mutual admirers. Mozart dedicated his six finest string quartets to Haydn, with the comment: "It was due from me, for it was from Haydn that I learned how quartets should be written." "It was affecting," says a contemporary observer, "to hear him speak of the two Haydns or any other of the great masters; one would have imagined him to be one of their enthusiastic pupils rather than the all-powerful Mozart." Haydn's respect for Mozart was equally profound, and even more creditable, in that he was older and less appreciated by the Viennese public than the man he lost no opportunity to praise. He often asserted that he never heard one of Mozart's compositions without learning something from it; and once when "Don Giovanni" was being discussed he made a period to the argument by saying: "I cannot decide the questions in dispute, but this I know, that Mozart is the greatest composer in the world." Mozart was thus much more than

a mere successor of Haydn in the usual course of musical evolution ; he gave fully as much as he received. His short though full life, moreover, came to an end eighteen years before Haydn's more leisurely one ; so that in a purely human as well as an artistic sense, we can look upon him, in relation to Haydn, as a sort of brilliant younger brother.

Johann Chrysostum Wolfgang Theophilus Mozart, generally known to the world as Wolfgang Amadeus * Mozart, was born at Salzburg, a small town southwest of Vienna, in Austria-Hungary, on January 27, 1756. His father was Leopold Mozart, a professional musician of excellent abilities, court-composer to the Archbishop of Salzburg, and author of a School for the Violin which in its day was known throughout Europe. He was a devoted father, and although there has been some difference of opinion as to his character, it is certain that he spared no pains in the education of his son, which he considered the chief business of his life. He has been charged with penuriousness, with narrowness and bigotry, and with having

*Amadeus is the Latin form of the Greek name Theophilus. The German form, Gottlieb, was also sometimes used.

forced his son to be a prodigy for the sake of gain ; but there is no evidence that he ever acted unconsciously, and the very thoroughness and almost mechanical regularity of the training he gave Wolfgang were invaluable in laying the foundations of his remarkable technique.

Under his father's careful tutelage the young Wolfgang, together with his sister Maria Anna, who was almost equally precocious, advanced rapidly in music. When he was but three he picked out simple chords at the piano ; at four he played minuets and other short pieces ; and at five he composed them. His early compositions were carefully copied out in a sketch-book, at first by his father and later by himself, and dated ; so that we have documentary evidence that they were actually written by him at an almost incredibly early age. The first, dictated when he was five years old, is a Minuet and Trio.

Figure XIV. MOZART's First Composition. Minuet, with Trio.



MOZART

tr.

3

f. 3

f. 3

Trio.

A musical score for piano, featuring two staves. The top staff is in 3/4 time with a treble clef, and the dynamic is marked 'f.'. The bottom staff is in 4/4 time with a bass clef, and the dynamic is also 'f.'. Both staves show a series of eighth and sixteenth note patterns.



Minuet da Capo.

In this childlike but well-organized piece is shown already a perfect mastery of the simple three-part song-form which is, as we have seen, the structural embryo of the sonata. Both minuet and trio consist of (a) an eight-measure sentence, cadencing in the dominant, or contrasted

tonal centre, (b) a four-measure clause of contrast, and (c) a four-measure clause echoing the last half of the first sentence, and closing in the home-key. Thus both halves of the piece, and the entire piece, as a whole, illustrate the fundamental principles of musical design in a very consummate way. All this, however, Mozart might have done simply by careful observation and imitation of methods familiar to all contemporary composers. What is therefore even more remarkable in such early work is the variety of detail that he manages to introduce. In view of the fact, which we shall later find very significant, that his skill as an artist lay largely in his command over *variety* of effect (while Haydn's consisted more in the salient unity of his composition), it is exceedingly interesting to note that, at five years old, Mozart uses so complex a device as shifted rhythm* in the manipulation of his motif. In the fifth measure of the minuet, namely, he writes his motif on the second and third beats, thus producing a very charming effect of cross-accentuation. It is also noticeable that in so short a piece as this we find triplets (measures 7 and 15) and groups of six-

* See page 147.

teenth notes (in the trio), obviously introduced for the sake of rhythmic diversity.

Even greater ingenuity, of a similar sort, is shown in a piece which he composed in March, 1762. The theme runs like this:

Figure XV.

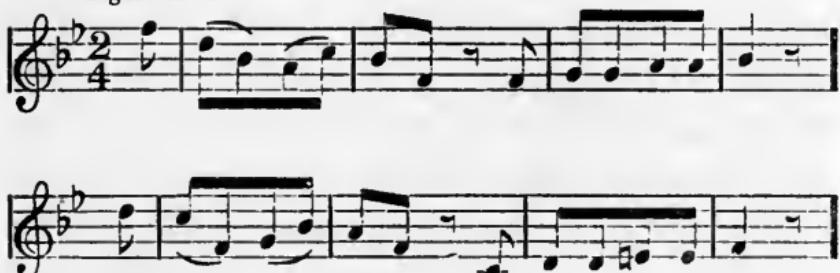
The image displays three staves of musical notation. The top staff is for the treble clef (G-clef) and the bottom staff is for the bass clef (F-clef). Both staves are in 2/4 time and B-flat major. The notation consists of a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some notes grouped by vertical stems. The first staff begins with a bass note followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The second staff begins with a bass note followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The third staff begins with a bass note followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The notation is identical for all three staves, creating a repeating melodic pattern.

How many composers, whether aged six or sixty, would have spontaneously thought of so

MOZART

charming an arrangement of the phrases, which we may symbolize with the letters A B B A C C? Most minds would have traveled the old time-honored rut, writing A B A B in something like this fashion :

Figure XVI.



But Mozart knew how to compose. Nor does his ingenuity fail him when in the last section of the piece he wishes, while repeating the essence of his idea, to reach the tonic instead of the dominant key. Simply dropping out the second A-phrase, he writes :

Figure XVII.



and the trick is done. It was by a steadily broader application of principles such as are here illustrated that he gradually became so marvelously skilful in composition.

Concerning the extraordinary physical delicacy of the young Mozart's ear there are many stories, some of which are probably true. He is said to have fainted on hearing a trumpet. According to Schachtner, an intimate friend of the Mozarts, he was able to perceive an interval of pitch so small as the eighth of a tone. The story is that Wolfgang was allowed to play one day on Schachtner's violin, which he called, on account of its full, rich tone, "Butter-fiddle." "Herr Schachtner," he announced a few days later, "your violin is half a quarter of a tone lower than mine; that is, if it is tuned as it was when I played it last." The violin was brought out, and proved, Schachtner says, to be pitched as the boy had stated. As Schachtner, trained in literature by Jesuits, had the literary man's instinct for effective statement, it is necessary to discount such tales a little; but the extraordinary delicacy of Mozart's ear is sufficiently proved. For that matter, it needs no proof; so keen a sense of design would have been impossible to

him had he lacked the requisite physical basis of accurate perception and discrimination of tones.

The first twenty-five years of Mozart's life were spent largely in professional tours, as a piano virtuoso, with intermittent periods at home in Salzburg devoted to study and composition. Appearing as a boy-prodigy when he was only six years old, before he was twenty-five he had made five extended and uniformly successful tours. He appeared in most of the larger German and Italian cities, as well as in Brussels, Amsterdam, Paris, and London, everywhere giving new proofs of the quickness, elasticity, and certainty of his musical powers. In Paris, when eight years old, he "accompanied a lady in an Italian air without seeing the music, supplying the harmony for the passage which was to follow from that which he had just heard. This could not be done without some mistakes, but when the song was ended he begged the lady to sing it again, played the accompaniment and the melody itself with perfect correctness, and repeated it ten times, altering the character of the accompaniment for each." * "On a melody

* Jahn's Life of Mozart, English trans., I., 37.

being dictated to him, he supplied the bass and the parts without using the clavier at all."* In Rome, when fourteen years old, after hearing Allegri's *Miserere* sung in the Papal chapel by a nine-part chorus, he went home and copied out from memory the entire work. A few mistakes were corrected after a second hearing. Such feats as this bespeak a mastery of the technique of pure music even more remarkable, and far more important, than his so much talked of skill as a performer on the piano, organ, and violin. Had music not become to him in early youth a natural language, a second mother-tongue, he could never have learned, in his manhood, to manipulate it with such extraordinary freedom, ingenuity, and power.

In the intervals of his travels, Mozart had to spend his time in Salzburg, a town almost intolerably uncongenial. It was a dull, provincial place, the butt of innumerable sarcasms. There was a saying: "He who comes to Salzburg becomes in the first year stupid, in the second idiotic, and in the third a true Salzburger;" and Mozart, in whom taste and experience wrought together to make provincialism odious, was

* Jahn's *Life of Mozart*, English trans., I., 37.

never tired of telling of a Salzburgian who complained that he could not judge Paris satisfactorily, "as the houses were too high and shut off the horizon." "I detest Salzburg and everything that is born in it," he wrote; "the tone and the manners of the people are utterly insupportable." Such a place would have been distasteful enough to the gay and highly social temperament of Mozart even had he had no responsibilities there; but it was his position of music-director to the Archbishop of Salzburg, with the dependence it involved, that finally exhausted his patience. Hieronymus, who became Archbishop in 1772, was a man famed for his churlishness and arrogant, bullying ways. He made his poor music-director's life a burden; he treated him as a hireling, made him eat with the servants, and called him contemptuous names, such as "Fex," "Lump," "Lausbube." Mozart, driven to desperation, finally applied for his discharge. Receiving no attention, he went in person to press the matter, and was then actually thrown from the Archbishop's ante-room by a petty official. This insult marked the end of his galling relation with his patron. From 1781 until his death he lived in Vienna, pick-

ing up a scanty livelihood by teaching and giving concerts.

His situation, after this open rupture with the system of patronage which was the only solid dependence of the eighteenth-century composer, was most precarious. The Viennese public was notoriously fickle towards even the most popular pianists and teachers, while the number of educated people who could be depended upon to buy serious compositions was small, and publishers were consequently unable to pay composers so well as they could in Beethoven's day. To make matters worse, Mozart was careless in money affairs, luxurious in his tastes, and so weakly amiable that he would at any time give a friend his last kreutzer. We cannot, then, be surprised that when Leopold Mozart, who was naturally cautious, conservative, and worldly, heard that his son had taken lodgings with a certain Madame Weber, in Vienna, and fallen in love with her daughter Constanze, he summarily commanded him to break off the affair. Mozart respectfully but firmly refused to deprive Constanze, whose position in the house of her shiftless and half-drunken mother had aroused his pity, of

the benefit of his friendship ; and as his father had foreseen, this friendship rapidly deepened into love.

Leopold Mozart for a long time stubbornly withheld his consent to the marriage ; but at last, overborne by his son's persistence and by the intercession of friends, he gave the pair a reluctant blessing. They were married August 4, 1782. The sequel proved that both father and son were justified in their opinions. The Mozart ménage was truly most erratic. Husband and wife were equally improvident and unmethodical. They were always poor, frequently in actual want. On the other hand, as Wolfgang had hoped, Constanze's virtues as a comrade compensated for her deficiencies as a housekeeper, and their congeniality of temperament made them contented in the midst of disorder, poverty, and care. There is a story that a friend, calling on them one cold winter morning, found them waltzing together, and was told that, as they had no fuel, they were keeping warm in that way. The incident is typical of their existence—irresponsible, haphazard, and yet on the whole happy.

The remaining events of Mozart's short life,

from his marriage in 1782 to his death in 1791, were all artistic events—works composed—standing out luminous against a dark background of poverty, struggle, and pain. His three great operas were written during this time. “The Marriage of Figaro” was first produced at Vienna in 1786; “Don Giovanni” at Prague, in 1787; and “The Magic Flute” at Vienna, in the year of Mozart’s death. In the realm of absolute music Mozart was equally productive all through this period. The six great string quartets dedicated to Haydn date from 1782, 1783, and 1784. The three quartets written for Frederick William II of Prussia were composed in the spring of 1790. The four greatest string quintets were written in 1787, 1790, and 1791. Finally, the three finest and most mature symphonies, works which will endure as long as music does, were all written within two months in the summer of 1788. His last work was the famous Requiem, begun in July, 1791. His strong constitution was now beginning to give way under the long strain of poverty and unceasing mental labor, and he gradually became haunted by the idea that he was writing this Requiem for himself. He grew

morbid and gloomy, but continued to work with feverish energy. The last evening of his life he looked at his unfinished score with tears in his eyes, saying, "Did I not say I was writing the Requiem for myself?" And later, when he became delirious, he was still busy with the Requiem, imagining it played, and blowing out his cheeks to imitate the trumpets. He died quietly on the evening of December 5, 1791, having accomplished an enduring work in thirty-five laborious, brilliant, and painful years.

This story of Mozart's last ten years is undoubtedly one of the strangest pages of musical biography. The contrast between his external and his internal life is so violent, so startling, that we rub our eyes involuntarily, wondering if the facts as we know them can be true. And indeed we can believe in them only when we assume that his mind was independent of its environment to a degree uncommon even with genius. Mozart seems to have been a dual person, to have lived two lives at once; outwardly hounded by creditors, worn with the most prostrating and debasing anxiety, forgetting his cares only in a dissipation that was as

squalid as they, he was all the time pursuing his artistic ideals with the highest success, and with the serenity of complete mastership. In his nature it was not even a step from the ridiculous to the sublime—the two extremes coexisted and interlaced.

The case of Mozart is in fact an eloquent human proof of the truth of Schopenhauer's theory that pure music is a world by itself, parallel with the actual world of ordinary experience but independent of it. The plastic artist works in materials familiar to his ordinary experience ; he puts in his pictures or statues the men, women, animals, trees, and other physical objects that he sees about him daily. Not so the musician. He deals with ideas that have no existence outside of his art ; and he therefore constantly keeps up in his mind two independent trains of thought, coexistent but unrelated. That Mozart, whose purely musical genius was perhaps the brightest and most complete that ever existed, habitually lived this double mental life, there are many evidences. His sister-in-law described him as follows : " He was always good-humored, but thoughtful even in his best moods, looking one straight

in the face, and always speaking with reflection, whether the talk was grave or gay ; and yet he seemed always to be carrying on a deeper train of thought. Even when he was washing his hands in the morning, he never stood still, but walked up and down the room humming, and buried in thought. At table he would often twist up a corner of the table-cloth, and rub his upper lip with it, without appearing in the least to know what he was doing, and he sometimes made extraordinary grimaces with his mouth. His hands and feet were in continual motion, and he was always strumming on something—his hat, his watch-fob, the table, the chairs, as if they were the clavier.” Other contemporaries have recorded that he carried on this musical thought while having his hair dressed, while bowling or playing billiards, while talking or joking, and even, wonderful to say, while listening to other music that did not especially interest him. “The greater industry of his later years,” said his wife, “was merely apparent, because he wrote down more. He was always working in his head, his mind was in constant motion, and one may say that he never ceased composing.” Lange, his brother-in-law,

observed that "when he was engaged on his most important works he took more than his usual share in any light or jesting talk that was going on." When his wife was confined of her first child he was working on the second of the quartets dedicated to Haydn ; he brought his table to her room, and frequently rose to cheer or comfort her in her pain, without apparently interrupting his train of thought. On the evening before the day set for the first performance of "Don Giovanni," the overture was still unwritten, though Mozart doubtless had it perfectly clear in his mind. He sat up most of the night copying it out, his wife meantime plying him with punch and with stories to keep him awake ; and by seven in the morning it was complete. When he sends his sister a prelude and fugue he apologizes for the prelude being copied after the fugue instead of before it. "The reason was," he adds, "that I had already composed the fugue, and wrote it down while I was thinking out the prelude."

It is necessary to bear constantly in mind this independence, activity, and self-sufficiency of Mozart's musical thought-processes, if we would at all understand the paradox of his personal-

ity. Mozart the man, and Mozart the musician, were two beings. The man, when all is said, and in spite of many endearing traits, was disappointingly commonplace. Although he was a good linguist, and fond, as a boy, of mathematics, he was intellectually undistinguished. His letters are rather conventional, he kept no journal, he read little, and though he said a sharp or clever thing now and then his conversation was not remarkable. Emotionally he was also not unusual. Amiable, generous, and honorable, he was rather lacking in will-power, rather immature and unformed.

His mental attitude and his conduct in the world were curiously childlike. He was even unable to care for his own person ; his wife attended to his clothes and cut up his meat at table. In money matters he was not a child, but a baby. Only six months after his marriage he began a long course of borrowing, in small sums, from friends and relatives, and he became later a familiar figure to the Viennese pawnbrokers and usurers. To make matters worse, he was so kind-hearted that he could not endure the sight of suffering when he had money to relieve

it. The result was that he gave away freely what he had borrowed with difficulty, and sunk daily deeper in the morass of hopeless debt. His dealings with Albert Stadler, an excellent clarinetist and a wholly unreliable man, will serve as a specimen of his guilelessness. Being asked by Stadler for a loan of fifty ducats, he gave him instead two valuable watches to place in pawn, on the understanding that he should redeem them in due time. Of course Stadler did nothing about it ; whereupon Mozart gave him the fifty ducats, together with interest, so that he might redeem the watches. Stadler kept the money. And what is more remarkable, Mozart seems to have cordially forgiven him, and later to have made him further loans.

Mozart's high spirits were unquenchable. A tireless jester, a graceful dancer, a good hand at billiards, clever as an impromptu poet of doggerel verses and as a deviser of practical jokes, he found in society the relaxation he needed from the severe mental concentration of composing ; and there is no doubt that he gave himself up to conviviality and to frivolous amours more than would to-day be considered becoming. His fondness for wine and punch were generally

known, and he himself confessed to his wife that he was not always faithful to her. But it must be remembered that in pleasure-loving Vienna, in the eighteenth century, manners were lax, and that Mozart, although by his very sensitiveness peculiarly subject to temptation, was never grossly or habitually vicious. His failings were those of a high-spirited, vivacious, ardent temperament, combined with an amiable, but not a profound character. There was no depravity in him, but there was at the same time little moral or mental elevation. His humor, which bubbled forth unceasingly, was of the flavor of the comic papers and of tavern horse-play. He used to make his friend Leutgeb, a horn-player, submit to mock penances as the price of concertos for his instrument. Once the penalty was to collect all the orchestral parts from the floor, where Mozart threw them as they were copied; another time it was to sit behind the stove until the piece was written. The score of one of these concertos bears the inscription: "Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart takes pity on Leutgeb, ass, ox, and simpleton, at Vienna, March 27, 1783." Another is written in black, red, blue, and green ink. Mozart was fond of writing, to original

doggerel words, for performance by gatherings of his friends, comic canons, in which the curious duality of his nature is strikingly illustrated. The words were colloquial, full of slang, and often coarse; the music, written in one of the most severe of contrapuntal forms, was always gracious and consummately wrought as only Mozart knew how to make it. His musical humor reaches its acme in the "Musikalische Spass," or, as he himself called it, the "Peasants' Symphony," for string quartet and two horns. This is nothing less than a parody of the kind of work that Mozart was constantly producing in all seriousness—a *Divertimento* in regular form, but supposed to be written by a tyro and played by amateurs. The horns come in pompously with wrong notes; the first violin, ascending a long scale, goes half a tone too high; at the end, in the midst of a fanfare in F-major by the horns, the string instruments strike in each in a different key. "The attempt after thematic elaboration," says Jahn, "is very ludicrous; it is as though the composer had heard of such a thing, and strove to imitate it in a few phrases, greatly to his own satisfaction. The art is most remarkable whereby the pretended

ignorance never becomes wearisome, and the audience is kept in suspense throughout."

Thus at every turn are we impressed with that wondrous inspiration and skill as an artist which were so curiously combined in Mozart with lack of distinction as a man. Even Haydn, for all his normality and usualness of emotion, had a certain human quaintness and sweetness for which we miss any analogue in Mozart. Yet when we shift the point of view, and study the artists rather than the men, it is Mozart who stands out as the more interesting figure. As we saw in the last chapter, Haydn's power as an artist depended chiefly on the trenchancy and practical grasp of his mind, by which he was enabled to crystallize into forms of salient unity the motifs, phrases, and sections of his music. System is the keynote of his work ; he was an organizer, both by natural faculty, and in obedience to the needs of his time. And he had the defects of his merits, in a certain monotony, angularity, and cut-and-dried precision. Mozart, on the contrary, even in his earliest pieces, already cited, showed a more flexible artistic technique ; and beginning where Haydn left off, he was able to carry the same sort of organization into a higher stage,

combining with the unity of the whole a much greater diversity in the parts. Variety is as notable in Mozart's work as unity in Haydn's. His art is more subtle, and not a whit less solid.

In the first place as regards the themes themselves, Mozart's are longer and more complex than Haydn's. It is hard to imagine Haydn disposing his phrases with the ingenuity and mental grasp shown by the melody in Figure XV., written when Mozart was only six years old. The characteristic of this melody is that the phrases are not immediately repeated, thereby balancing in the most obvious way, but alternated with apparent whimsicality, which, however, eventually issues in order. This is even more conspicuously shown by the following theme from Mozart's great G-minor Quintet:

Figure XVIII.



Here a broad and perfectly poised melody is evolved from two simple motifs by a deftly managed accretion. The effect reminds one of Beethoven; Haydn could scarcely have conceived it.

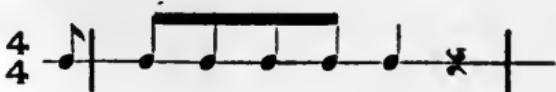
In harmony Mozart is more venturesome than his predecessor. His harmonic structure, while no less clear than Haydn's, is less bald, less obvious. In the fifth of the quartets dedicated to Haydn, for example, in A-major, there is an early and pronounced modulation to C-major; after which the second theme comes in regularly in the dominant key. The effect of this insistence on a comparatively distant key is to blur slightly the contour of the form, and to prevent any possible sense of triteness. In the Finale of the third quartet, Mozart, after ending his first part strongly in C-major, jumps suddenly, quite without warning, to an emphatic chord of D-flat major,—a device by which we are irresistibly reminded of the complete shifts of tonality at the beginning of the coda of the first movement of the "Eroica" Symphony. Perhaps the most brilliant stroke of genius in harmonic conception that Mozart ever made, however, is the famous passage introducing the C-major Quartet. It runs as follows :

BEETHOVEN AND HIS FORERUNNERS

Figure XIX. Introduction to MOZART's C-major Quartet.

It was to passages of this kind (though even Mozart could not write many equalling it in supernal beauty and mystery of effect) that he owed his reputation for heterodoxy and radicalism among the pedants of the time. A musical connoisseur of Vienna is said to have torn up the instrumental parts of these quartets in his anger at finding that "the discords played by the musicians were really in the parts"; the parts were also returned from Italy as being "full of printer's errors"; and even so good a musician as Fétis undertook to "correct" this very Introduction. Thus to scandalize the conservative is ever the effect of the daring, novel, and unprecedented conceptions of genius.

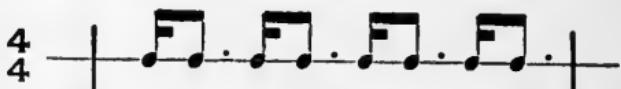
Mozart's rhythms, again, are much more various than Haydn's. The characteristic figures of his themes are apt to be strongly contrasted, whereas Haydn's generally bear a family resemblance to one another. Take, for example, the themes of the first movement of Mozart's String Quintet in G-minor. The first is a simple series of eighth-notes :



The second is more resilient and individual :



The third, or conclusion-passage, is of a most strongly marked character :



Not only do these figures contrast well as they appear successively, but Mozart knows how to combine them in a very intricate web. When the third one enters in the 'cello, the second violin and viola toss back and forth the first, the second viola plays a slow sustaining part in quarter and half-notes, and the first violin has a racing counterpoint in sixteenth-notes. All this means life, variety, interest. And as for the question of diversity in phrase-structure, it is only necessary to compare the Minuet of Mozart's G-minor Symphony, with its odd three-measure phrases and its wide climactic stretches of melody, with the square-cut Minuet of Haydn's Surprise Symphony, to gain a vivid idea of the younger composer's superiority in rhythmic life.

In the general construction of his works, moreover, Mozart is more skillful than Haydn.

Haydn's transitions from theme to theme are frequently conventional to a degree—passages of scales or arpeggios unrelated to the thematic material, and therefore mechanical in effect. Mozart, whose melodic fecundity was limitless, is much more apt to write new, subsidiary melodies for his transitions ; and though such passages lacked the fine economy of Beethoven's carefully wrought transitions, founded on the themes themselves, yet they were far more vital than Haydn's empty formulas. When it came to the working out of the themes, in the "development section" of the sonata, Mozart again had Haydn at a disadvantage, owing to his greater contrapuntal technique, the result of early study, and to the superior native logic of his mind. Haydn's development sections are apt to sound perfunctory ; worked out more by rule of thumb than by spontaneous fancy, they hold together imperfectly, and seem fragmentary and artificial. Mozart's are more fluent, more sequacious, and more inevitable. Mozart is thus in all respects a more subtle artist than Haydn.

In expression, the prevailing quality of Mozart's work is a clear serenity, an indescribable

joyfulness and starry beauty, the natural result of his artistic perfection. In spite of a deep and mordant passion that he undoubtedly voices at times, as in the G-minor Quintet and in portions of the quartets and the G-minor Symphony, in spite of the breadth and heroism of such movements as the Andante of the E-flat Quartet and the Finale of the Jupiter Symphony, and in spite of the mystic vagueness and aspiration of that marvellous Introduction to the C-major Quartet, which stamps him as an idealist, at least *in posse*, his general tone is pagan, unsophisticated, naïve. He not only lacks the self-consciousness, the tragic intensity, and the fierce, virile logic of Beethoven; he lacks the genial, peasant humanity of Haydn. There is an aloofness, a detachment, a rarefied purity, about his music, that makes it difficult to describe in terms of human feeling. It has the irresponsible perfection, the untarnished lustre, not to be dimmed by human tears, of the best Greek art.

Every attempt that has been made to describe in words the differences between the music of Mozart and that of his great successor, Beethoven, has necessarily failed. The

matter is too subtle for literary description. Yet Henry Frédéric Amiel, with his usual marvelous perceptiveness, wrote in his journal, after hearing quartets by the two masters, a passage that must be quoted here. It at least suggests their characteristics with an unerring insight:

“Mozart—,” writes Amiel, “grace, liberty, certainty, freedom, and precision of style,—an exquisite and aristocratic beauty,—serenity of soul,—the health and talent of the master, both on a level with his genius; Beethoven, more pathetic, more passionate, more torn with feeling, more intricate, more profound, less perfect, more the slave of his genius, more carried away by his fancy or his passion, more moving and more sublime than Mozart. Mozart refreshes you, like the ‘Dialogues’ of Plato; he respects you, reveals to you your strength, gives you freedom and balance. Beethoven seizes upon you; he is more tragic and oratorical, while Mozart is more disinterested and poetical. Mozart is more Greek, and Beethoven more Christian. One is serene, the other serious. The first is stronger than destiny, because he takes life less profoundly; the second is less strong, because he has dared to measure him-

self against deeper sorrows. His talent is not always equal to his genius, and pathos is his dominant feature, as perfection is that of Mozart. In Mozart the balance of the whole is perfect, and art triumphs. In Beethoven feeling governs everything, and emotion troubles his art in proportion as it deepens it."

While the contrast here so well brought out is perhaps slightly over-stated, it is certain that between Mozart and Beethoven comes the gap between the serene childhood and the serious and thoroughly awakened maturity of secular music. Even in the earliest works of Beethoven, obviously modelled as they are in the forms and idioms made common property by his forerunners, there is a virility, a profundity, an intensity of spiritual ardor, for which we look in vain in Haydn and Mozart. In him the idealism which with them was instinctive arrives at self-consciousness. He is founded securely upon them, but he carries music to higher issues than it was in their happier and simpler natures to imagine. In leaving Mozart, therefore, we leave the preparatory stage of the art of pure music, to pass into the stage in which it realized its promises and accomplished its mission.

CHAPTER VII
BEETHOVEN

4

CHAPTER VII

BEETHOVEN



ONE of the most fascinating, and at the same time the most baffling, problems of the biographer, is to determine just what proportion of the characteristics of a great man are inherited from his ancestors, and what proportion take their origin in himself as an individual, to what degree his personality is merely a resultant or résumé of various qualities converging from many points into a fresh focus, and to what degree it is a unique creation, without traceable precedents or ascertainable causes. It is always possible to concoct a given character, however striking or unusual, by a judicious selection of ancestral traits ; if we will but search far enough back, any man's ancestors will make up quite an adequate repre-

sentation of the entire human race, so that each of his qualities need only be observed, noted, and traced to the particular great-grandfather or great-great-grandmother who happened to manifest it previously ; and we can thus cleverly explain and label the oddest individual. The real difficulty is to explain how he happened to inherit just these qualities and no others, why he is, in a word, just this self instead of some other self, equally derivable but totally different. This difficulty has brought the whole subject of heredity into disfavor with some students ; and it is certain that in the present state of our knowledge the study of the individual must precede and guide the study of his origins. Nevertheless, there are cases in which the essential qualities are so unmistakably inherited that the most illuminating way to approach an individual is through a study of his ancestors.

Such a case is Beethoven's. A French writer, M. Teodor de Wyzewa, in a book called "Beethoven et Wagner," has made so masterly, so discriminating an analysis of Beethoven's parents and grandparents, that no one can read it without a strong conviction of the important

part played by heredity in the formation of this extraordinarily unique, peculiar, and well-defined character. No man ever existed who was more intensely individual than Beethoven ; yet many of the traits which in him were so marvelously blended, and which in the blending produced so novel a flavor, were undoubtedly derived from earlier, and quite undistinguished, members of his family.

Beethoven's grandfather, Ludwig van Beethoven, born at Antwerp in 1712, was of an old Flemish family of marked national character. He early removed to Bonn, the seat of the Elector of Cologne, as a court-musician, and in 1761 became court music-director, a position which he held with zeal and ability until his death in 1773. "He was," says M. de Wyzewa, "a man of middle stature, sinewy and thick-set, with strongly-marked features, clear eyes, and an extreme vivacity of manner. Great energy and a high sense of duty were combined, in him, with a practical good sense and a dignity of demeanor that earned for him, in the city he had entered poor and unknown, universal respect. His musical knowledge and ability were considerable ; and although he was

not an original composer, he had frequently to make arrangements of music for performance by his choir. He was a man of strong family and patriotic sentiment, and established in Bonn quite a colony of Flemish, his brothers and cousins."

Beethoven's grandmother, on the other hand, born Maria-Josepha Poll, developed early in her married life a passion for drink which finally obliged her husband to send her to a convent, where she remained, without contact with her family, until her death. It is probable that this unfortunate tendency was but a symptom of a morbid weakness of the nervous system, beyond the control of her will—a fact, as we shall see, interesting in its possible bearing on the interpretation of her grandson's idiosyncrasies.

In 1740 was born to this ill-assorted couple a son, Johann van Beethoven, the father of the composer. M. de Wyzewa treats him summarily: "His character, like his intelligence, can be described in one word—he was a perfect nullity"; adding, however, that he was not a bad man, as some of the anecdotes regarding his conduct toward his son seem to indicate:—

BEETHOVEN

“He was merely idle, common, and foolish.” For the rest, he was a tenor singer in the court chapel, and he passed his leisure in taverns and billiard-rooms.

Beethoven’s mother was a woman of tender sensibilities and affections, condemned to a life of unhappiness by the worthless character of her husband. Her whole life was devoted to the education of her son Ludwig, who wrote of her: “She has been to me a good and loving mother, and my best friend.” She was of delicate health, and died of consumption when Beethoven was but seventeen.

255

This was the curiously assorted set of ancestors from which Beethoven seems to have drawn his more prominent traits. If, to begin with, we eliminate the father, who, as M. de Wyzewa remarks, was an “absolute nullity,” and “merely the intermediary between his son and his father, the Flemish music-director,” we shall find that from the latter, his grandfather, Beethoven derived the foundation of his sturdy, self-respecting, and independent moral character, that from his mother he got the emotional sensibility that was so oddly mingled with it, and that from his afflicted grandmother, Maria-Josepha Poll, he

inherited a weakness of the nervous system, an irritability and morbid sensitiveness, that gave to his intense individualism a tinge of the eccentric and the pathological. Without doubt the most important factor in this heredity was that which came from the grandfather ; and although M. de Wyzewa is perhaps led by his racial sympathies to assign an undue importance to this Flemish element, yet what he has to say of it is most suggestive. Pointing out the obvious fact that purely German composers, as well as poets and painters, are naturally disposed to vagueness, sentimentality, and cloudy symbolism, he remarks that nothing of the sort appears in Beethoven, "whose effort was constantly toward the most precise and positive expression"; that he eliminated all the artifices of mere ornament, in the interests of "a rigorous presentation of infinitely graduated emotions"; and that he "progressed steadily toward simplification of means combined with complication of effect." He shows how Beethoven owed to his Flemish blood, in the first place, his remarkable accuracy and delicacy of sensation ; in the second place, his wisdom and solid common sense, his "*esprit lucide, raison-*

able, marchant toujours droit aux choses nécessaires"; in the third place, his largeness of nature, grandeur of imagination, robust sanity, and heroic joy, justly likened to similar qualities in Rubens; and finally, his moral earnestness, that "energy of soul which in his youth sustained him in the midst of miseries and disappointments of all sorts, and which later enabled him to persist in his work in spite of sickness, neglect, and poverty."

Of Beethoven's mother M. de Wyzewa says, "Poor Marie-Madeleine, with her pale complexion and her blonde hair, was not in vain a woman '*souffrante et sensible*,' since from her came her son's faculty of living in the emotions, of seeing all the world colored with sentiment and passion." This emotional tendency, the writer thinks, the Flemish blood could not have given; and "it was to the unusual union of this profound German sensibility with the Flemish accuracy and keenness of mind that Beethoven owed his power to delineate with extraordinary precision the most intimate and tender sentiments." With a final suggestion, tentatively advanced, that the weaknesses of Beethoven's character, his changeable humor, his

sudden fits of temper, his unaccountable alternations of gaiety and discouragement, may have been due to a nervous malady traceable to the grandmother, Maria-Josepha Poll, this masterly study of Beethoven's antecedents, from which, whether we entirely accept its conclusions or not, we cannot fail to gain illumination, comes to a close.*

Ludwig van Beethoven, the second of seven children of Johann and Maria-Magdalena Beethoven, was born at Bonn on the Rhine, on December 16 or 17, 1770. Inheriting the musical talent of his father and grandfather, he early showed so much ability that his father, stimulated by the stories of the wondrous precocity of Mozart, decided to make him into a boy prodigy. Ludwig was put hard at work, at the age of four, learning to play the piano, the violin, and the organ, and to compose; and though he had by no means the facility of Mozart, he progressed so well that at thirteen he was made "cembalist" [accompanist] in the court band of the Elector of Cologne, whose seat was at that time in Bonn. The first public mention

* "Beethoven et Wagner. Essais d'Histoire et de Critique Musicales." Teodor de Wyzewa. Paris, 1898.

of Beethoven occurs in an article entitled "An Account of the Elector of Cologne's Chapel at Bonn," written in 1783, and runs as follows:

"Ludwig van Beethoven is a promising boy of eleven. [Johann van Beethoven had evidently trimmed his son's age to suit his own idea of what a self-respecting prodigy's should be.] He plays the piano with fluency and force, reads well at sight, and has mastered the greater part of Sebastian Bach's 'Well-Tempered Clavichord.' Any one acquainted with this collection of Preludes and Fugues in every key will understand what this means. His teacher has given him instruction in Thorough Bass, and is now practicing him in composition. This youthful genius deserves assistance, that he may be enabled to travel; if he continues as he has begun, he will certainly become a second Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart."

The Elector of Cologne seems to have acted upon the suggestion of the last sentence. In 1786 he sent Beethoven for a short visit to Vienna, the Mecca of all musicians. Here he had the privilege of playing before the great Mozart himself, who, becoming deeply interested in his masterly improvisation, turned to

the company with the remark: "Look after him. He will some day make a great name in the world." The visit so auspiciously begun was unfortunately cut short by the death of Beethoven's mother, and he returned to Bonn to assume the responsibilities of his inefficient father in caring for his brothers and sisters. He now entered on a depressing and long-continued drudgery of teaching, which he seems to have endured courageously. His sterling character, as well as his genius, began to attract the attention of many of the wealthy nobles of Bonn, patrons of art; so that difficult as was this period of his life, it laid a solid foundation for his subsequent fortunes.

Ludwig Nohl, in his "Beethoven Depicted by His Contemporaries," gives an interesting sketch of Beethoven as he appeared at about this time, to a young lady, afterwards Frau von Barnhard, who met him at the musical soirées of Prince Lichnowsky and Herr von Klüpfell. "Beethoven," says Nohl, "thought so highly of the talents of this young girl that for several years he sent her regularly a copy of his new pianoforte compositions, as soon as they were printed. Unfortunately not one of the friendly

or joking little letters, with which he accompanied his gifts, has been preserved: so many handsome Russian officers frequented Herr Klüpfell's that the ugly Beethoven made no impression on the young lady.

“ *Herr Klüpfell* was very musical, and Beethoven went a great deal to his house, and often played the piano for hours, but always ‘without notes.’ To do this was then thought marvelous, and delighted every one. One day a well-known composer played one of his new compositions. When he began, Beethoven was sitting on the sofa; but he soon began to walk about, turn over music at the piano, and not to pay the least attention to the performance. Herr Klüpfell was annoyed, and commissioned a friend to tell him that his conduct was unbecoming, that a young and unknown man ought to show respect towards a senior composer of merit. From that moment Beethoven never set foot in Klüpfell's house.

“ Frau von Barnhard has a lively recollection of the young man's wayward peculiarities. She says: ‘When he visited us, he generally put his head in at the door before entering, to see if there were anyone present he did not like. He

was short and insignificant-looking, with a red face covered with pock marks. His hair was quite dark. His dress was very common, quite a contrast to the elegant attire customary in those days, especially in our circles. I remember quite well how Haydn and Salieri used to sit on the sofa at one side of the little music-room, both most carefully attired in the former mode with wigs, shoes, and silk stockings, while Beethoven came negligently dressed in the freer fashion of the Upper Rhine. Haydn and Salieri were then famous, while Beethoven excited no interest. He spoke with a strong provincial accent; his manner of expression was slightly vulgar; his general bearing showed no signs of culture, and his behaviour was very unmanly. He was proud, and I have known him refuse to play, even when Countess Thun, Prince Lichnowsky's mother, a very eccentric woman, had fallen on her knees before him as he lay on the sofa, to beg him to.”

This passage gives us a glimpse of the Vienna of the early nineteenth century, the Vienna of Beethoven's young manhood; and it is interesting to note how favorable an environment, on the whole, this capital of the musical world

was for the great composer. If the middle classes were not yet sufficiently educated in music to support many public concerts, there was at least among the aristocracy, who were rich, hospitable, and music-loving, plenty of generous patronage for rising composers. Many of the noble families maintained private orchestras, and paid liberally for new compositions. Haydn, as we have seen, spent most of his life in the service of the Esterhazys, and Mozart, although without a regular patron after his rupture with the Archbishop of Salzburg, wrote many of his works for royal or noble amateurs. Beethoven was even more generously supported. His removal from Bonn to Vienna, in 1792, was made at the expense of the Elector of Cologne; and after he was once settled there he received constant help from Rudolph, Archduke of Austria, from Princes Lobkowitz, Lichnowsky, and Kinsky, and from many others. Moreover, profiting much by Haydn's and Mozart's pioneer work in popularizing the higher forms of secular music, he was able to sell all his works to publishers at good prices, thereby supplementing his income from patrons. By 1800 his worldly situation was secure; in that year he

wrote to a friend: "Lichnowsky last year settled 600 florins on me, which, together with the good sale of my works, enables me to live free from care as to my maintenance. All that I now write I can dispose of five times over, and be well paid into the bargain."

There were, however, in Beethoven's situation, trying elements which gravely harassed and handicapped him. In the first place, he was as unfortunate in his family as he was fortunate in his friends. In his case, "the closest kin were most unkind." Even after the death of his shiftless and drunken father, in 1792, there were still two brothers, Carl and Johann, who remained throughout his life his evil geniuses. Almost incredible is their indifference to him, their utter failure to appreciate his noble nature. When he was prosperous they borrowed money from him, and even stole jewelry ; when he was poor and neglected they refused him the slightest favors. Carl left to him the care of his worthless son, who proved the greatest trial of his life. Johann, by withholding his closed carriage for a necessary winter journey, directly contributed to the illness that ended in his death. This utter lack of common sympathy had the most

poisonous effect on his sensitive, affectionate nature. It saddened, depressed, and embittered him.

A second cruel disadvantage was the malady of deafness which began to afflict Beethoven in 1798, and by the end of 1801 became serious. At first there was merely buzzing and singing in the ears ; then came insensibility to tones of high pitch, such as the higher register of the flute and the overtones in human speech ; and finally such a serious deafness that he had to give up playing in public and conducting, and to carry on conversation by means of an ear-trumpet or paper and pencil. Formidable to his musical work as was such an impediment, it was even more baneful in its effect on his relations with men, and so upon his disposition. As far as his work was concerned, it had its compensations, in so far as it increased his isolation, his concentration on the marvelously complex and subtle involutions of his musical ideas. It insulated him from distractions, and freed him to explore with single mind the labyrinths of his imagination. But on his social and emotional life deafness wrought sad havoc—all the sadder because the tendencies it reënforced were already

too strong in Beethoven's intense and proud nature.

Beethoven had, in a peculiar degree, both the merits and the defects of the individualist. Not even Thoreau was more resolved to follow only the dictates of his own genius, to find his code of action within, in the impulses of his own heart and mind, rather than without, in the conventions, habits, and customs which guide the ordinary man. Like all idealists, he believed in the beauty and rightness of the whole world of human feeling, revealed to him by his naïve consciousness, not trimmed to suit prejudice or partial views of what is proper and admissible. Gifted with an emotional nature of rare richness and intensity, and with an intellect capable of dealing directly with experience on its own account, he lived the life and thought the thoughts that seemed good to him, quite indifferent to accepted views which happened to run counter. Thus his sincerity necessarily led him into an unconventionality, an indifference to established ways of acting, feeling, and thinking, which, when circumstances pushed him still further away from the common human life, easily passed over into morbid eccentricity.

His unconventionality appears in all his actions and opinions, from the most trivial to the most momentous. Take, for instance, to begin with, the matter of personal appearance, dress, and demeanor. What an altogether unusual man it was that Carl Czerny, as a boy of ten, in 1801, was taken to visit! "We mounted," says Czerny, "five or six stories high to Beethoven's apartment, and were announced by a rather dirty-looking servant. In a very desolate room, with papers and articles of dress strewn in all directions, bare walls, a few chests, hardly a chair except the ricketty one standing by the piano, there was a party of six or eight people. Beethoven was dressed in a jacket and trousers of long, dark goat's hair, which at once reminded me of the description of Robinson Crusoe I had just been reading. He had a shock of jet black hair, (*cut à la Titus*), standing straight upright. A beard of several days' growth made his naturally dark face still blacker. I noticed also, with a child's quick observation, that he had cotton wool, which seemed to have been dipped in some yellow fluid, in both ears. His hands were covered with hair, and the fingers very broad, especially at the tips." The oddity in dress ob-

served by Czerny was habitual with Beethoven. "In the summer of 1813," says Schindler, "he had neither a decent coat nor a whole shirt." His habit of dabbling his hands in water, while following out a musical thought, until he was thoroughly wet, cannot have improved his clothes. Nor did his carriage set them off: he was extremely awkward with his body—could not dance in time, and generally cut himself when he shaved, which, however, he did infrequently.

Very marked was his unconventionality in social relations. So profound was his sense of personal worth and of the fatuity of arbitrary class-distinctions that no aristocrat ever regarded his birth and breeding, no plutocrat ever regarded his wealth, with more intense pride than Beethoven felt in his democratic independence and self-sufficiency. (That was a characteristic answer he made the court, in one of his numerous law-suits, when asked if the "van" in his name indicated nobility. "My nobility," he said, "is here and here"—pointing to his head and heart. When he was offered a Prussian order, as a recognition of his artistic achievements, he preferred a payment of fifty ducats, and took the opportunity to express his contempt for some people's

“longing and snapping after ribands.” When his brother Johann, a stupid but prosperous worldling, sent him a New Year’s card signed “Johann van Beethoven, Land-owner,” he returned it with the added inscription : “Ludwig van Beethoven, Brain-owner.” But this wholesome self-respect, the result of a faith in himself and a discrimination between essences and accidents too rare among men, sometimes became exaggerated by passion into an impatient, egotistical pride less pleasant to note. When the court just mentioned, for example, refused, on the ground of his being a commoner, to hear his case, he was so angry that he threatened to leave the country—a reaction as childish as it was futile. On receiving, late in life, an honorary diploma from the Society of Friends of Music in the Austrian Empire, his impulse was to return it, because he had not been earlier recognized. Nor was he inclined to forgive readily a fancied slight to his dignity ; he was always getting embroiled with his friends on account of some insult he read into their conduct. He was indeed too often the slave, instead of the master, of his own sensitiveness, and though his point of view as an individualist was higher than that of the herd, it

had its own peculiar limitations. This is clearly illustrated by the following passage in one of his letters: "Kings and princes can indeed create professors and privy-councillors, and confer titles and decorations, but they cannot make great men—spirits that soar above the base turmoil of this world. When two persons like Goethe and myself meet, these grandees cannot fail to perceive what such as we consider great. Yesterday, on our way home, we met the whole imperial family; we saw them coming some way off, when Goethe withdrew his arm from mine, in order to stand aside; and say what I would, I could not prevail on him to make another step in advance. I pressed down my hat more firmly on my head, buttoned up my great-coat, and, crossing my arms behind me, I made my way through the thickest portion of the crowd. Princes and courtiers formed a lane for me; Archduke Rudolph took off his hat, and the Empress bowed to me first. These great ones of the earth *know me*. To my infinite amusement, I saw the procession defile past Goethe, who stood aside with his hat off, bowing profoundly. I afterward took him sharply to task for this." In the sort of pride manifested by Beethoven on this

occasion, there is an element of the hysterical; had his sense of humor been applied to himself as well as to his companion, he would have been "infinitely amused" to behold himself, with his hat pressed firmly on his head and his great-coat buttoned up, demanding for the aristocracy of genius that very servility which he despised when it was shown to the aristocracy of rank. It was Beethoven himself this time who, misled by an overweening pride, was hankering after the accident when he already possessed the essence.

Examined by and large, however, Beethoven does not often disappoint us by failing to make that distinction between the nucleus of reality and its swathings and accompaniments, which lay at the foundation of his greatness. Nowhere were his instinct for the real and his contempt for the superfluous more active than in his thoughts on religion, the deepest and most serious topic on which a man can think. Sturdily ignoring, all his life, the trappings of ritual, and the narrow preciseness, as it seemed to him, of creeds and theologies, he as resolutely clung to the essence of religion, the belief in a universal, inclusive consciousness, and in the importance to

it of right human effort. On the practical side his religion was eminently positive, efficient, sane ; it prompted him to full development of his genius, without neglect of the responsibilities of ordinary life. Of the metaphysical side it is a sufficient description to say that there lay constantly on his desk, copied by his own hand, these sentences :

“ I am that which is.

“ I am all that is, that was, and that shall be.
No mortal man has lifted my veil.

“ He is alone by Himself, and to Him alone do all things owe their being.”

Combined with the mental originality, the habit of deciding all questions for himself and as if they had never before received solutions, which made Beethoven so pronounced a non-conformist in all matters from his toilet to his religion, was a physical peculiarity that underlay much of what was grotesque about him. This was the nervous irritability inherited from his grandmother. His moodiness, his sudden alternations of depressed and excited states, his bursts of uncontrollable anger, his wild pranks and practical jokes, were almost beyond doubt the result of an unstable nervous system. So

restless was he that he was continually changing his lodgings ; once it was because there was not enough sun, again because he disliked the water, another time because his landlord insisted on making him deep obeisances ; in the later part of his life, when his habits were well known, he had difficulty in finding rooms anywhere in Vienna. He put little restraint upon his tongue ; Schindler says that “ the propriety of repressing offensive remarks was a thing that never entered his thoughts.” After hearing a concerto of Ries, he wrote a furious letter to a musical paper, enjoining Ries no longer to call himself his pupil. This his friends persuaded him not to send. He was so impatient that he often took the medicines intended for an entire day in two doses ; so absent-minded that he often forgot them altogether. A badly cooked stew he threw at the waiter, eggs that were not fresh at the cook. To a lady who had asked for a lock of his hair he sent, at the suggestion of a friend, a lock cut from a goat’s beard ; and when the joke was discovered he apologized to the lady, but cut off all intercourse with the friend. An English observer wrote that “ One unlucky question, one ill-judged piece of advice, was sufficient to es-

trange him from you forever." Even on his best friends and his patrons, he wreaked his ill-humors. When Prince Lobkowitz, to whom he owed much, had been so unfortunate as to offend him, he went into his court-yard, shook his fist at the house, and cried "Lobkowitz donkey, Lobkowitz donkey." It is not hard to see why casual acquaintances, who knew nothing of the noble qualities behind his stormy and perverse exterior, frequently thought him mad.

Nor will it be difficult, after this brief summary of Beethoven's fundamental traits, to understand the formidable effect that deafness, coming upon him slowly but relentlessly in early manhood, when intellectual achievement and social and personal happiness seemed equally attainable, exercised upon his character. Naturally self-dependent, deafness made him self-absorbed; naturally proud, it made him so sensitive to imagined slights, so suspicious of even his best friends, that he would at times refuse all intercourse with people; naturally taking keenest joy in intellectual activity, this physical disability forced him, while gradually renouncing social pleasures, to throw himself with ever greater concentration and completer devotion

into his work. All these effects of his deafness are clearly discernible in the letters written about 1800. "I can with truth say," he writes in that year, "that my life is very wretched; for nearly two years past I have avoided all society, because I find it impossible to say to people, *I am deaf!*" "Plutarch," he continues, "led me to resignation. I shall strive if possible to set Fate at defiance, although there must be moments in my life when I cannot fail to be the most unhappy of God's creatures. . . . Resignation!—what a miserable refuge! and yet it is my sole remaining one." And still later in the same letter: "I live wholly in my music, and scarcely is one work finished when another is begun; indeed, I am now often at work on three or four things at the same time."

Many such passages occur in the letters of this period, but in none does the pathetic mingling of almost despairing wretchedness with a noble courage that will not despair become so striking as in the remarkable document known as "Beethoven's Will," written to his brothers in the fall of 1802. The summer had been a trying one, and at the end of it Beethoven, apparently half expecting and a little desiring death,

yet dreading its interruption of his beloved work, uttered this cry of pain, which deserves to be quoted almost entire:

HEILIGENSTADT, Oct. 6, 1802.

TO MY BROTHERS CARL AND JOHANN BEETHOVEN.

O ! you who think or declare me to be hostile, morose, and misanthropical, how unjust you are, and how little you know the secret cause of what appears thus to you ! My heart and mind were ever from childhood prone to the most tender feelings of affection, and I was always disposed to accomplish something great. But you must remember that six years ago I was attacked by an incurable malady, treated by unskilful physicians, deluded from year to year by the hope of relief, and at length forced to the conviction of a *lasting affliction* (the cure of which may go on for years, and perhaps after all prove impracticable).

Born with a passionate and excitable temperament, keenly susceptible to the pleasures of society, I was yet obliged early in life to isolate myself, and to pass my existence in solitude. If I at any time resolved to surmount all this, oh ! how cruelly was I again repelled by the experience, sadder than ever, of my defective hearing !—and yet I found it impossible to say to others: Speak louder; shout ! for I am deaf ! Alas ! how could I proclaim the deficiency of a sense which ought to have been more perfect with me than with other men,—a sense which I once possessed in the

highest perfection; to an extent, indeed, that few of my profession ever enjoyed! Alas, I cannot do this! Forgive me therefore when you see me withdraw from you with whom I would so gladly mingle. My misfortune is doubly severe from causing me to be misunderstood. . . . Such things brought me to the verge of desperation, and well-nigh caused me to put an end to my life. *Art! art* alone, deterred me. Ah! how could I possibly quit the world before bringing forth all that I felt it was my vocation to produce? And thus I spared this miserable life—so utterly miserable that any sudden change may reduce me at any moment from my best condition into the worst. It is decreed that I must now choose *Patience* for my guide! This I have done. I hope the resolve will not fail me steadfastly to persevere till it may please the inexorable Fates to cut the thread of my life. . . . I joyfully hasten to meet Death. If he comes before I have had the opportunity of developing all my artistic powers, then, notwithstanding my cruel fate, he will come too early for me, and I should wish for him at a more distant period; but even then I shall be content, for his advent will release me from a state of endless suffering. Come when he may I shall meet him with courage. Farewell! Do not quite forget me, even in death; I deserve this from you, because during my life I so often thought of you, and wished to make you happy. Amen.

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN.

It is time, however, turning away from this painful contemplation of a strong nature's struggle with adverse fate, to examine that artistic work in which its strength wrought more successfully, and to which its weaknesses were less disastrous. Beethoven's artistic life, as is well known, has been divided into three periods: that of training and assimilation, which lasted to about 1803, that of complete mastery and mature creation, occupying about a decade, and that of exploration of new, untravelled paths, lasting from 1813 to the end.* The division is a convenient and natural one, as will become clear as we go on.

In the technique of his art, Beethoven was largely self-taught. It is true that he had the privilege of some lessons with Haydn and with the famous theoretician Albrechtsberger; but he was too restive under strict surveillance, and too intolerant of hard-and-fast rules, to take kindly to their instruction, and Albrechtsberger flatly said of him: "He will never do anything according to rule; he has learnt nothing." The truth is, Beethoven was too busy with his own

* For a full discussion of these "periods," see Lenz's "*Beethoven et ses trois styles.*"

problems, the problems of structure and expression, to pay the requisite attention to the intricacies of counterpoint, which he never really mastered. What he tried to do, however, he did thoroughly. All the works of his first period, of which the most important are the pianoforte sonatas up to the "Waldstein," the first three pianoforte concertos, the String Quartets, Opus 18, and the First and Second Symphonies, show him in the 'prentice stage, learning to treat competently the sonata form and the secular style inherited from Haydn and Mozart. The First Symphony, in spite of its dignified proportions, is essentially an exercise in acquisition. The Second, which is the most important single work of the entire period, is, as Grove says, an advance rather "in dimensions and style, and in the wonderful fire and force of the treatment, than in any really new ideas, such as its author afterwards introduced." It is in the four movements prescribed by tradition, except that a Scherzo is substituted for the minuet. Its phraseology and harmony recall the older manner. The themes of the opening Allegro are built up out of short, precise phrases, exactly balancing one another, as will be vividly realized by anyone who will

compare the first theme with the corresponding subject in the Third Symphony, so much freer and more ingenious in contour. The transitions are somewhat perfunctory. The second subject appears regularly in the dominant key. The development, in comparison with that of Beethoven's later work, is mechanical, obvious, trite. In every way he is still, in the Second Symphony, sitting at the feet of his predecessors, learning patiently, minutely, what they have to teach him. As Grove well says: "This symphony is the culminating point of the old, pre-Revolution world, the world of Haydn and Mozart; it was the farthest point to which Beethoven could go before he burst into that wonderful new region into which no man before had penetrated."*

The indebtedness of the early Beethoven to his immediate forerunners, and the untiring pains he took to learn his lesson thoroughly, call for especial emphasis because so much has been said and written of his originality, his disregard for conventions, his non-conforming, revolutionary tendencies. He was indeed an anarch of outworn conventions, but he was anything but

* The foregoing quotations from Grove are to be found in his "Beethoven and His Nine Symphonies."

B E E T H O V E N

an anarch of art. No man ever recognized more cordially his inherited resources ; no man was ever less misled by a petty ideal of mere oddness, by a confusion of idiosyncrasy with originality. Beethoven was a great individual because he assimilated the strength of all humanity. His originality, like all originality that has value, consisted in a fresh, sincere expression of universal truths through the best technical means which were available in his day. If any reader has a lingering doubt of Beethoven's faithfulness as a student, he need but examine the Sketch-books edited by Nottebohm from the original manuscript note-books in which Beethoven laboriously worked out his conceptions. Quite tireless was he in the manipulation of a theme, over and over again, until it suited his rigorous taste ; truly wonderful is the ever-sensitive discrimination with which he excised redundancies, softened crudities, enhanced beauties, and refined texture, until at last the melody was as perfect, as inevitable, as organic, as a sentence by Flaubert, Sir Thomas Browne, or Cardinal Newman.

It was indeed precisely by these qualities of the conscientious artist that Beethoven was chiefly enabled to push his work to a higher

BEETHOVEN AND HIS FORERUNNERS

stage of interest than his forerunners had attained. He went obediently as far as they could lead him before attempting to push further alone. We find, even in this Second Symphony, conceptions that Haydn and Mozart could not have imagined ; but these are worked out with a skill and ingenuity like theirs in kind, if greater in degree. The most striking and pervasive difference lies in the immensely increased closeness of texture, intensity of meaning, logic, vigor, poignancy. All the strings are tightened, and flabbiness, diffuseness, meaningless ornament and filling are swept away. As Beethoven's self-assurance, habit of examining all conventions for himself, and relentless discrimination of the essence from the accident, already noted, made him in society a brief but pregnant talker, an eccentric but true man, so they made him a forcible, concise, and logical musician. How ruthlessly he discards the merely pretty, the sensuously tickling, the amiably vapid and pointless ! He wastes no energy in preamble, interlude, or peroration. He puts in his outline in a few bold, right strokes, leaving much to the intelligence of his hearers. Concentrating his whole mind on a single thought, he follows

it out relentlessly to the end, will not be distracted or seduced into side-issues. He tolerates no superfluous tones in his fabric, but makes it compact, close, rigorously thematic. The expanses of the music stretch out broad and sequential, the climaxes unfold deliberately, gather force and body like a rising sea. Look through the long, complex development section of the Allegro of the Second Symphony, and note its fine economy of means, its surprising grandeur of effect; see how two or three motifs are made to flower out into the most luxuriant forms, and how a page can be educed from a measure. This is what is meant by thematic development, which no man thoroughly understood before Beethoven.

This insistent coherence and sequaciousness is kept from becoming tiresome or monotonous by the variety of the themes themselves and of the modes adopted for developing them. Indeed, so consummately is the fundamental progressiveness hidden under a variegated and ever-changing surface that the casual observer is apt to be impressed chiefly by the sudden novelties of effect, the unexpected alternations of loud and soft, the collocation of contrasted rhythms,

the prominence given to distant tonalities by modulation, in Beethoven's work, and to realize its solidity and balance only after a more careful study. Rhythmical variety alone in Beethoven is so perpetual and so ingenious that a large treatise would hardly suffice to describe it. Short, nervous phrases of half-a-measure length alternate with wide expanses where for four or more measures there is not so much as a comma.* Motifs longer or shorter than the measure are so adjusted as to make up considerable passages in which the accent constantly changes.† Diminutions and augmentations of motifs are deftly used.‡ In ways too numerous to mention Beethoven introduces life into his work by constant variation of rhythmic grouping.

As for harmonic variety, his daring was such as to scandalize all the conservatives of his generation. The First Symphony opens with

* E. g. Second Symphony: Larghetto : passage immediately preceding the Restatement section.

† E. g. Second Symphony: Larghetto : passage at the end of the second subject. A motif of four sixteenth-notes in $\frac{3}{8}$ measure.

‡ E. g. Second Symphony : Finale : passage of half-notes in coda augmented later to whole notes.

a passage of which Grove writes: "That a composition professing to be in the key of C should begin with a discord in the key of F, and by the third bar be in that of G, was surely startling enough to ears accustomed to the regular processes of that time." The passage did in fact meet with strong opposition from such critics as Preindl, Abbé Stadler, and Dionys Weber. In the Second Symphony there are many foretastes of the radical harmonic methods Beethoven later developed. Returning to his Restatement section, for instance, in the first movement, the key of which is D, he reaches the very remote key of C-sharp major, which he emphasizes by a long reiteration of its tonic chord, forte, lasting six full measures. Then, with a diminuendo, a long C-sharp, in unison, is held until, by the addition of an A, we are made to feel that this C-sharp has become a leading-note in the original key of D, and so we are home again.* The coda of the same movement contains one of those rapid, kaleidoscopic modulations through many keys which

* Compare what is said on page 207, of the harmonic device used by Haydn to introduce the last entrance of the theme in the Finale of his Fifth Salomon Symphony.

Beethoven knows how to use so excitingly. In eleven measures we are bundled through G, B-flat, A-minor, B-flat again, C-minor, E-flat minor, F-sharp minor, and E, and after it all find ourselves quite breathless, but safely home again in D. Many similar passages of harmonic virtuosity are to be found in the Second Symphony; and they show Beethoven feeling his way toward the wonderful flexibility of his later harmonic style.

n. 3.
In his early thirties, then, at the close of his apprenticeship or period of acquisition of resources and establishment of technique, Beethoven had in the first place thoroughly assimilated the sonata-form developed by his forerunners as the most convenient and natural medium for the expression of the free, direct, and widely eclectic secular spirit in music. He had, in the second place, raised this form to higher potencies of beauty and expressiveness, by rigorous exclusion of what was superfluous and inorganic in it, by purification of its texture and strengthening of its essential structural features, and by introduction into it, through the power of his genius for composition, of more subtle and more thoroughgoing contrasts of

BEETHOVEN

rhythm, harmony, and general expressive character. Still he was not content. His soaring idealism demanded a still greater flexibility of form, as well as a more intense and intimate utterance of feeling. "I am not satisfied," he wrote in 1802, "with my works up to the present time. From to-day I mean to take a new road." What that road was, what superstructure he proceeded to build on so solid a foundation, we must now try to determine.

CHAPTER VIII
BEETHOVEN
(CONTINUED)

1. *W. C. C. (W. C. C. 1900)*
2. *W. C. C. (W. C. C. 1900)*
3. *W. C. C. (W. C. C. 1900)*

CHAPTER VIII

BEETHOVEN

(CONTINUED)



HISTORY and analytic thought alike reveal the fact that the highest pinnacles of art can be scaled only at those happy moments when favoring conditions of two distinct kinds happen to coincide. The artist who is to attain supreme greatness must in the first place have at his command a type of artistic technique that has already been developed to the verge of maturity, but that still awaits its complete efflorescence. As Sir Hubert Parry well says: "Inspiration without methods and means at its disposal will no more enable a man to write a symphony than to build a ship or a cathedral." These means must be already highly developed, yet not to the point of exhaustion. If the technique is primitive, no ardor of artistic enthusi-

asm can reach through it a full utterance ; if all its potencies have been actualized, no inspiration can reanimate it.

In the second place, the artist so happy as to inherit a technique ripe but not over-ripe, must also, if he is to attain supreme greatness, be in unison with the thought and feeling of his age, echo from the common mind of his fellows a deep, broad, and universal eloquence, as though all mankind spoke through him as mouthpiece. He must live in the midst of some great general awakening of the human spirit, to which he lends voice. Merely personal art can be interesting, graceful, charming, moving, noble, but it cannot have the profundity, the breadth, the elevation, which we recognize in the highest art, such as Greek sculpture, Elizabethan drama, or the symphonic music we are now studying. "A great man," says Emerson, "finds himself in the river of the thoughts and events, forced onward by the ideas and necessities of his contemporaries. He stands where all the eyes of men look one way, and their hands all point in the direction in which he should go. Every master has found his materials collected, and his power lay in his sympathy with his people and in his love

of the materials he wrought in. Men, nations, poets, artisans, women, all have worked for him, and he enters into their labors.” *

When Beethoven resolved on his “new path,” his ambition was favored by the two necessary conditions. That he had at his command an inherited technique, just brought to the verge of maturity, we have already seen. And he had furthermore, behind and below him, as a rich nourishing soil for his genius, a great, new, common enthusiasm of humanity.

The eighteenth century had been a time of formalism in art and literature, of rigid conventionality in social life, of paternalism in politics, and of dogmatic ecclesiastical authority in religion. At its end, however, all those dim, half-conscious efforts of humanity towards freer and fuller life which we have indicated under the general term of idealism, were beginning to reach definiteness and self-consciousness. Men were beginning to assert deliberately and openly what they had long been feeling intuitively but insecurely. They were boldly erasing from their standards the mediæval formula: “Poverty, celibacy, and obedience,” to write in its

* “Representative Men,” Riverside ed., p. 182.

place the modern one: "Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." They were revolting from the tyrannies of Church and State, to proclaim the sacredness of the individual soul.

It was Beethoven's high privilege to be the artistic spokesman of this new, enfranchised humanity. Haydn, as we know, had reflected for the first time in music the universal interest in all kinds of human emotion, sacred and profane, that marked the dawn of the new era. But in his music the emotion remains naïve, impulsive, childlike; it has not taken on the earnestness, the sense of responsibility, of manhood.) It is still in the spontaneous stage, has not become deliberate, resolute, purposeful. But with Beethoven childishness is put away, and the new spirit steps boldly out into the world, aware of its obligations as well as of its privileges, clear-eyed, sad, and serious, to live the full yet difficult life of freedom.)

The closeness of Beethoven's relation to the idealistic spirit of his time is shown equally by two distinct yet supplementary aspects of his work. As it was characteristic of the idealism which fed him to set supreme store by human emotion in all its intensity and diversity, so it is

characteristic of his music to voice emotion with a fullness, poignancy, definiteness, and variety that sharply contrast it with the more formal decorative music of his forerunners. And as it was equally characteristic of idealism to recognize the responsibilities of freedom, to restrain and control all particular emotions in the interest of a balanced spiritual life, so it was equally characteristic of Beethoven to hold all his marvelous emotional expressiveness constantly in subordination to the integral effect of his composition as a whole, to value plastic beauty even more highly than eloquent appeal to feeling. In other words, Beethoven the musician is equally remarkable for two qualities, eloquence of expression and beauty of form, which in his best work are always held in an exact and firmly controlled balance. And if we would fully understand his supremacy, we must perceive not only his achievements in both directions, but the high artistic power with which he correlates them. Just as the courage to insist on the rights of the individual, and the wisdom to recognize and support the rights of others, are the two essentials of true idealism, so eloquence and beauty are the equal requisites of genuine art.

So closely interwoven, so mutually reactive, are these twin merits of expression and form in the great works of Beethoven's prime—in the pianoforte sonatas from the *Waldstein* to Opus 90, in the *String Quartets*, Opus 59 and 74, in the fourth and fifth piano concertos and the unique concerto for violin, in the Overture to "*Coriolanus*," the incidental music to "*Egmont*," and the opera, "*Fidelio*," in the *Mass in C*, and above all in the six great symphonies from the "*Eroica*" to the Eighth—that it seems like wanton violence and falsification to separate them, even for the purposes of study. Synthesis, at any rate, should go hand in hand with analysis; we should constantly remember that the various qualities our critical reagents discern in this music, exist in it not, as in our analysis, single and detached, but fused and interpenetrative in one artistic whole. The chemist may find carbon, and hydrogen, and oxygen in the rose, but a rose is something more, something inefably more, than a compound of these chemical elements.

If, bearing constantly in mind the artificiality of analysis, we nevertheless attempt an enumeration of separate qualities in Beethoven's mature

work, we are first of all arrested by the vigor, definiteness, and variety of his expression. In his symphonies from the Eroica on, for example, there is a far more direct and poignant utterance of a wide range of feeling, than we can find anywhere in Haydn or Mozart, or in the early Beethoven. The first "subjects" of the Third, Fifth, Seventh and Eighth Symphonies, shown in Figure XX, illustrate strikingly, brief as they

Figure XX. *Allegro con brio.*

The image displays four musical staves, each representing a different symphony's first subject. The first staff (C major, 3/4 time) shows a simple rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The second staff (F major, 2/4 time) shows a more complex pattern with eighth and sixteenth notes, and a dynamic instruction 'Vivace.' The third staff (G major, 6/8 time) shows a rhythmic pattern with eighth and sixteenth notes, and a dynamic instruction 'Allegro vivace.' The fourth staff (C major, 3/4 time) shows a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes.

are, this diversity and force of the works of the middle period. Who that had once heard them could ever forget them? And who could ever

confuse one with another? How they pierce through the veil of the past, with their vibrant accent of the living, breathing man!

Beethoven's subjects, attaining so wonderful a degree of individualization, mark the culminating point of a long process of crystallization of definite forms out of the tonal matrix of earlier music. Ever since the Florentine reformers essayed to infuse into academic art the human expressiveness of idealized popular songs and dances, the latent potentialities of vocal phrases to express earnest emotion, and of vigorous rhythms to express the more active and animated feelings, had been becoming more and more fully utilized. We saw how the popular songs were embodied and transfigured in the sarabandes and other slow, serious movements of the eighteenth century suites, and how the rhythms of the popular dances were wrought into their idealized gavottes, bourrées, minuets, and gigues.* We saw how Haydn, in his naïve yet skillful way, seized upon and refined the primitive but emotionally vital folk-music of his race.† We saw how Mozart contributed still further, by

*See Chap. III., p. 118. †See Chap. V., p. 199.

his wonderful genius for organization, to the progress in delicacy, variety, and breadth, of the same type of art. And now we see, in Beethoven, the issue of this long growth: we see him bring to their apotheosis the eloquence of the song and the animation of the dance; we see him, by full utilization of the harmonic and rhythmic potentialities of structure, by vigorous exclusion of the irrelevant and the superfluous, by full concentration of all his faculties of heart and mind on the one idea in hand, attaining a definiteness, a variety, and a compelling eloquence of expression, that may fairly be said to mark an epoch. Before Beethoven music was already an art; with him it becomes also a language.

The variety of what Beethoven has to say is as remarkable as the precision and force with which he says it. To study him is to discern the fallacy of the view so often heard that sentimental expression is the only kind possible to music. In Beethoven one can observe at least four well-contrasted general types of expressiveness, to say nothing of the infinite gradations between them. There is, in the first place, and as perhaps the dominant quality in all his work,

the virile energy, the massive and cyclopean power, as of a giant or a god, so well illustrated in the symphonic subjects of Figure XX. What vigor, what inexhaustible force, what a morning freshness and joy there is in such a theme as that of the "Eroica" Symphony! How inexorable is its rhythm, how broad, solid, and simple its harmonic foundation! What controlled excitement, what restrained ferocity, there is in that persistent four-tone motif of the Fifth Symphony—"Fate knocking at the door"! What swift, concise assertiveness, as in the fiat of an emperor, in the opening of the Eighth Symphony, though it was called by Beethoven "my little one"! Elemental strength is the most constant, pervasive quality of expression in Beethoven's work.

Yet, like every comprehensively great man, he had the feminine tenderness and sentiment without which primal power is primitive, and will mere willfulness. His ruggedness hid the most delicate sensibility. At his most heroic moments he is always melting into moods of wistfulness, yearning, and soft emotion. To go for illustration no further than the symphonies, it is sufficient to mention, in the "Eroica,"

the hesitant fervor of the second subject of the first movement; the deep and noble pathos of the subject of the Funeral March; the clear and rich emotion of the Trio (in the third movement), with its wonderful final strains, of which Sir George Grove said: “If ever horns talked like flesh and blood, they do it here;” in the Fifth Symphony, the poignant appeal of the second subject of the first movement, and the ceaselessly questing, gently insistent mood of the Andante; and in the Seventh, the resigned, yet still aspiring state of feeling voiced by the melody in A-major in the Allegretto. But it is impossible to do more than shadow forth dimly, in words, the emotions that glow with such deep color in this music. Moreover, to enumerate them is as unnecessary as it is thankless. Every one who knows music at all, knows how incomparable is Beethoven in the expression of all shades of tender, romantic, and impassioned human feeling.

A third sort of expression characteristic of Beethoven is that of the whimsical, the perverse, the irrepressibly gay. Before him, the classical symphony had had room for the brisk jollity of the Haydn finale and for the forthright ani-

mation of the Mozart minuet ; but nothing like the Beethoven scherzo had existed. In Italian the word scherzo means a joke ; and when he substituted the rollicking scherzo for the more formal and stately minuet Beethoven introduced into music the element of banter, mischief, and whimsy. Even among his several scherzos, there is such a diversity of mood that they introduce into music far more than one new kind of expression ; their fancy is protean, inexhaustible. The scherzo of the "Eroica" is a mixture of mystery, gaiety, and headlong *elan* ; in that of the Fifth Symphony, a sort of groping as in darkness alternates with incisive, grandiose, military boldness ; in the middle Allegro of the Pastoral Symphony, taking the place of the scherzo, there is rustic merry-making, the awkward, good-natured gambols of peasants ; in the Presto of the Seventh, there is upwelling geniality, the broad smile of amiable indolence ; and in the Minuet of the Eighth, the old minuet stateliness gives place to a mixture of animal spirits and intellectual subtlety. Nor are the scherzos proper the only embodiment of the antics of this musical Pan ; such Finales as those of the Fourth, Seventh, and Eighth Sym-

phonies are but transfigured, ennobled scherzos, with the largeness of the heroic spirit added to the fancy, whim, and tireless merriment of the insatiable humorist. Beethoven is the extreme exponent of the spirit of comedy in music.

4 A fourth mood distinguishable in Beethoven is the mood of mystery. He loves to suggest the illimitable and the transcendent, to dissolve himself in vagueness ; to pique curiosity and stimulate imagination by long stretches of *pianissimo*, of amorphous, ambiguous harmony, of strange inarticulate melody that baffles the attention—long, wide hushes, audible silences. In these moods he seems to retire, after his on-slaughts of expression, into the deep subterranean reservoirs of the unexpressed. The Introduction to the Fourth Symphony is an example ; one hears in it, as it were, the groping of vast unorganized impulses that await a birth. The extended *pianissimo* passage that leads into the Reprise, in the same movement, makes a similar impression, the modulation to the home-key of B-flat, after the long groping in B-major, seeming like the opening of a window in a darkened room. The wide stretches of rippling violin figures, *piano*, in the “Scene by the

Brook" of the Pastoral Symphony illustrate another use of this device of monotony. They affect the mind, as Beethoven meant they should, like a placid sun-bathed landscape at noon, flat, silent, motionless. But perhaps the most striking instance of all is that wonderful page in the Fifth Symphony that prepares for the Finale. The sustained 'C's of the strings, the suppressed, barely audible tapping of the drums in the rhythm of the central motif of the work, the fragmentary, aimless, and yet cumulative phrases of the violins, instil a sense of some vast catastrophe impending; and then, after the deliberate, gradual crescendo, pressing upon every nerve, the great joyous theme of the Finale crashes in, to sweep all before it.

Marvelous indeed is this varied and ever forcible expression of feeling in the great works of Beethoven's maturity; but even more marvelous is the steady power by which he organizes these feelings into forms of perfect beauty, the unfaltering control by which he keeps the intensely characteristic from degenerating into caricature, the impassioned from becoming hysterical. He never forgets that, as an artist, he is the master, not the slave, of his inspiration, how-

ever seizing it may be. Though he infuses into music an eloquence new to it, he remembers that it is still music, and that it must be beautiful as music. Titanic were the labors he imposed upon himself to give his compositions balance, symmetry, logical coherence, integral unity emerging from an infinite variety of parts. His sketch-books, several of which, edited by Nottebohm, have been published by Breitkopf and Härtel, are the standing evidence of what endless effort it cost him to be an artist. In them we behold him at work, day by day, eliminating the irrelevant, reënforcing the significant, exploring the sources of melodic, rhythmic, harmonic, and structural variety, and returning upon his task to gather up all the threads into one complete, close-woven fabric. The result was a type of music seldom equalled, before or since, for that ordered richness, that complex simplicity, which is beauty.

An example or two will make this clearer than much description. The first subject of the Fifth Symphony, one of the most famous of Beethoven's themes, is entirely made up of ingenious combinations of the "Fate Knocking at the Door" motif, as follows:

BEETHOVEN AND HIS FORERUNNERS

Figure XXI. *Allegro con brio.*

How wonderful here is the stern and relentless logic of that insistently repeated rhythm, the utter naturalness of the melody which builds itself out of the various repetitions of the theme in different voices, and the rugged strength of the harmonic scheme of the entire passage ! Had we not documentary evidence, we should find it hard to believe that this was not a sudden and complete thought, struck out by Beethoven at a blow in some moment of high musical excitement. Yet his sketch-book reveals that it grew by a very gradual process of amendment and refining from the monotonous, uninteresting, almost fatuous bit of patchwork shown in Figure XXII. Another, slightly more advanced, state of the same idea is shown in Figure XXIII. In both these passages the rhythm is almost the only element that even dimly sug-

Figure XXII.





Figure XXIII.



gests the august gravity of the final version ; for the rest, these first attempts are depressingly futile.

The well-known and universally admired subject of the Andante of the Fifth Symphony is another illustration of Beethoven's artistic power. That was a rare skill indeed which could educe, even after long labor, this beautifully modulated and sustained theme (Figure XXIV), so subtle and varied in contour, from the trite embryo noted in Figure XXV.

Figure XXIV. *Andante con moto.*

Figure XXV.



The evolution of Beethoven's almost perfect ideas from their strangely featureless and uninteresting germs can perhaps be shown best of all, however, by the citation of several consecutive stages in the history of some single notable conception. The indescribably lovely second subject of the first movement of the *Eroica* Sym-

BEETHOVEN—CONTINUED

phony is shown in its final form at (e) of Figure XXVI; (a), (b), (c), and (d) of the same figure being a few of the many sketches through which Beethoven approached it. The

Figure XXVI. A few of the many stages in the evolution of the Second Subject of the 'Eroica' Symphony.

(a)



(b)



(c)



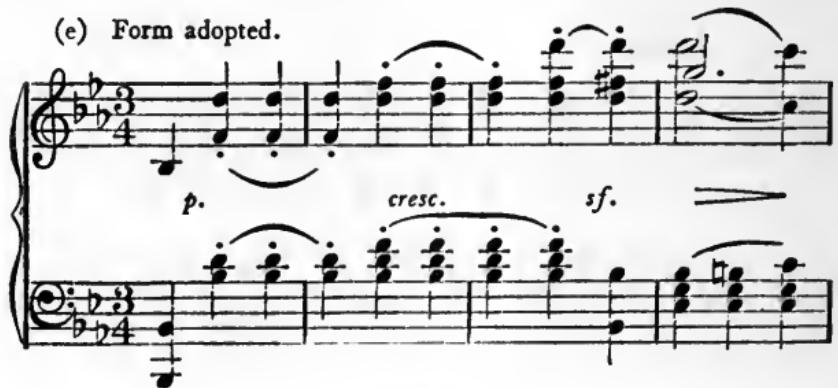
BEETHOVEN AND HIS FORERUNNERS



(d)



(e) Form adopted.



BEETHOVEN—CONTINUED

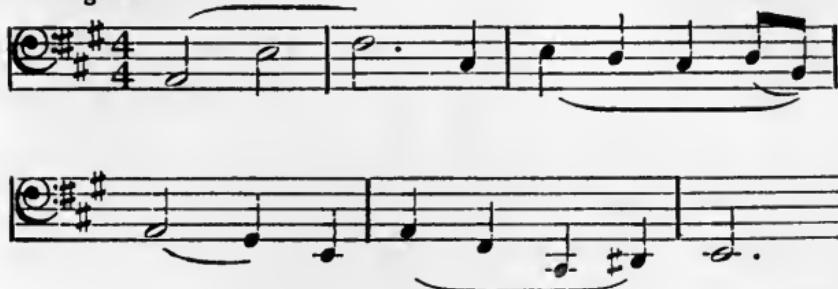
points of especial beauty in the matured theme appear sporadically in the earlier sketches. Of these the chief are: the insistent beat of the rhythm; the impressive cadence in the fourth measure and the beat of silence following it in the fifth; the rise to the poignant G in the seventh measure, and the lapse by rapid motion down to B-flat again; the sudden assumption of the minor mode in measure 9, and the modulation to the distant key of D-flat it suggests; and the uneven yet satisfying balance of the

three complete phrases, together with the sense of being poised in air given by the sudden cessation of the rhythmic pulse at a point so distant from the key. The rhythm appears in the very first sketch, marked (a); the cadence and beat of silence appear in (b), as does also the rise to G in the melody, except that the G is flattened, slightly sentimentalizing the effect. The modulation to the key of D-flat appears in (c) and (d), but in each case its effectiveness is much weakened by the quickly succeeding further modulation. The sense of poise referred to is entirely lacking in these two variants, because a fourth phrase is added to the three essential ones. In the final form all the effects are made with certainty and economy.

Beethoven's method of drafting and re-drafting his subjects enabled him to bring them at last to a formal perfection undreamed of by less painstaking composers. His best themes combine almost the highest possible degree of variety and unity, and therefore attain almost the highest possible degree of beauty. We saw, in connection with the Quintet of Mozart (Figure XVIII), how high synthetic powers of mind enable a composer to combine different

motifs in one theme in such a way as to attain great variety of parts with final unity of impression. Beethoven exhibits constantly, in his best work, an even higher degree of this synthetic power than Mozart was master of. He knew how to build the most diverse materials into a compact, indissoluble organism. His briefest themes often discover this power as strikingly as his long and elaborate movements. The first theme of the Sonata in A-major for Violoncello and Piano, which appears in Figure XXVII, is an example of the way the

Figure XXVII.



faculty shows itself within narrow limits. Here are six measures, each containing a different scheme of time values; yet the theme as a whole is as compelling in its unity and certainty of intention as it is engaging in its variety.

The exploitation of the primary themes in

the course of a long movement, however, the constant evocation from them of new meanings and interests, is of course the last and finest evidence of Beethoven's genius in composition. It was in this logical drawing forth of the implications of his thought that he was unapproachable. He uses to admiration all those devices of development we have already enumerated—inversion, augmentation, diminution, shifted rhythm, and the rest—yet never descends to the mechanical, as his great successor, Brahms, who is perhaps the only modern composer who compares with him in this faculty of logical development of an idea, sometimes does. Beethoven always seems to be merely making explicit what was implied in the theme itself. In Figure XXVIII are put down a few of the more important modifications of the first subject of the Eroica Symphony, as an illustration of the inexhaustibility of fancy displayed by Beethoven in this sort of development. (a) is the theme in its initial form. Note how, with that mysterious C-sharp in the bass, in the fifth measure, the outline is momentarily blurred, and the insistence on the tones of the triad relaxed, until with measure 7 the key is

BEETHOVEN—CONTINUED

Figure XXVIII. Some of the developments of the First Subject in the 'Eroica' Symphony.

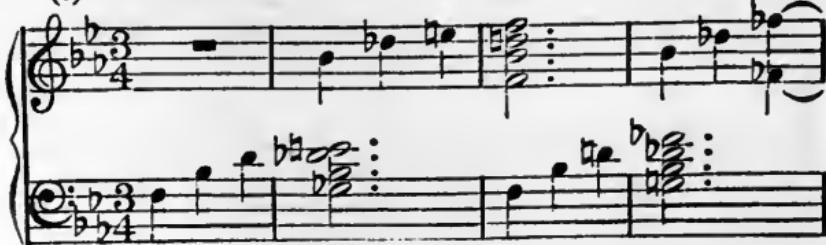
(a)



(b)



(c)



BEETHOVEN AND HIS FORERUNNERS



BEETHOVEN—CONTINUED

(f)

s.

etc.

(g)

pp.

p.

etc.

reentered and the sentence soon brought to a firm conclusion. No one but Beethoven could ever have conceived that C-sharp. In (b), which follows, in the score, immediately on (a), the second half of the motif is made the subject of a development by repetition, at a higher and higher pitch. In (c), which occurs after the second subject, and near the end of the first section of the entire movement, the same portion of the motif is further exploited. For the first four measures it is thrown back and forth in imitation. In the fifth, sixth and seventh measures it is given to the bass, in *diminution* (note how piquantly) and in the eighth measure it is both diminished and inverted, yet without giving the slightest impression of artificiality. The subject appears at (d), which is a part of the working-out portion of the movement, in the minor key, and rapidly modulating to distant keys, as is appropriate in that part of the composition the aim of which is to contrast with the definiteness, orderliness, and precision of the Exposition. At (e) the subject, still in minor, is heard in the bass, while the treble has as a counterpoint to it a tripping rhythm derived from another part of the original mate-

rial. At (f), becoming emphatic, magniloquent, the theme is sounded *forte*, and in unison by the whole orchestra, and extended by a natural magnification to an eight-measure phrase. This is developed at some length in the score. (g) is the beginning of the Coda. In one of Beethoven's breathless *pianissimos*, the subject is given by the second violins on their G-strings, the first violins meanwhile embroidering in an elastic staccato the most indescribably merry, light-hearted little counter-melody. From the freshness of this, one might fancy that the work was just opening rather than drawing to its close. Truly, Beethoven's imagination is like some friendly genie of the Arabian Nights, filling our cup of enjoyment as fast as it is drained.

The mental power that in the preliminary parts of composition reveals itself merely as a remarkable ingenuity, inventiveness, and elasticity of mind, appears, when contemplated in its larger action, almost superhuman in its breadth of grasp. In the conception and execution of a great symphonic work, as an integral whole of many and diverse parts, Beethoven is unapproachable. All the successive movements in a long work, all the themes and transitions, all

the rhythmic changes, all the modulations, temporary or prolonged, are foreseen and adjusted with perfect control. There is no feature of any moment that has not its relation to the whole. Often the reason of some apparent whim will not appear for pages ; but at last it will appear, and when it does it will be seen to fulfil a purpose never lost sight of. As a turret or window at the extreme end of a building may balance a similar feature at the other end, so Beethoven's treatment of a given theme, early in a movement, may be determined and illuminated by what he finally does to it in the Coda. So integral is his work, so firmly held in the grip of his inexorable artistic logic.

Beauty, in the great compositions of his prime, is therefore as omnipresent as expression ; and their supreme greatness is in fact due to the perfect balance, in them, of these two equally important elements of musical effect. Before passing on to the consideration of his later years, it will be well to make still clearer the fact of this balance of qualities by a brief reference to the highly interesting and significant attitude of Beethoven towards program music.

Program music differs from pure music in be-

ing aimed rather at the literal imitation or delineation of objects and events in the natural world than at the presentation, through orderly and consequently beautiful tone-combinations, of the general emotions that they arouse. Schütz, a very early German composer, depicting by a long downward scale an angel descending from heaven ; Beethoven, introducing the notes of the nightingale, quail, and cuckoo in his Pastoral Symphony ; Schubert, writing in the accompaniment of his song, "The Trout," a leaping figure suggestive of the motions of the fish in the water ; Raff, sounding the rhythm of a galloping horse all through the ride-movement of his Lenore Symphony: Wagner, imitating in the "Waldweben" the murmurings of the forest ; all these composers are writing program music. Of course there is no reason that program music should not be at the same time pure music, provided that the desire to imitate nature accurately does not lead the composer to slight the requirements of plastic beauty in the ordering and combination of his material. A portrait may be good decoration, if composition, massing, light and shade, coloring, and so on, are not sacrificed to a pitiless realism. Just so,

program music can be made beautiful, if the needs of abstract tonal beauty are duly considered.

But as a usual thing they are not. The program composer generally makes a fetish of his "idea," pursues it with the enthusiasm of the literalist, and quite neglects the formal symmetry, the stylistic congruity and harmony, of his web of tones. The result is that program music is as a rule more interesting than moving ; that in attempting to make pure sounds do what words, or even colors and shapes, can do better, it sacrifices the legitimate and characteristic effect of tones—the suggestion of a general state of feeling, potent by reason of its very vagueness, and transfigured by the abstract beauty of its medium.

Now Beethoven was obliged in his early maturity to face and solve this problem of program music for himself. His intense individualism, his susceptibility to strong feeling, his natural interest in the characteristic, the dramatic, the definite, and the opportunity he found, in music as he received it from his forerunners, for a more detailed expressiveness than had yet been attempted, all inclined him to take the

attitude of the program composer. The poetic conception of a work was so clear and distinct in his mind that he could easily assign it a descriptive title. He called his third symphony "The Eroica," his sixth the "Pastoral," and said that the motif of the fifth indicated "Fate Knocking at the Door." He called one of his piano sonatas "Les Adieux, l'Absence et le Retour;" of another, that in G-major, Opus 14, he said, "It is a dialogue between husband and wife, or lover and mistress; between the entreating and the resisting principle;" he tacitly admitted that the sonatas in F-minor, Opus 57, and in D-minor, Opus 29, were illustrative of Shakespeare's *Tempest*. Other works, not specifically named by him, wore very naturally titles given by others: as the "Pastoral Sonata," the "Moonlight Sonata," and the "Sonata Appassionata." At the same period that he was writing these instrumental works with programmatic aspect, he wrote also his incidental music descriptive of Goethe's "Egmont," his overture on the subject of "Coriolanus," and his single opera, "Fidelio." Of interpretation he said:

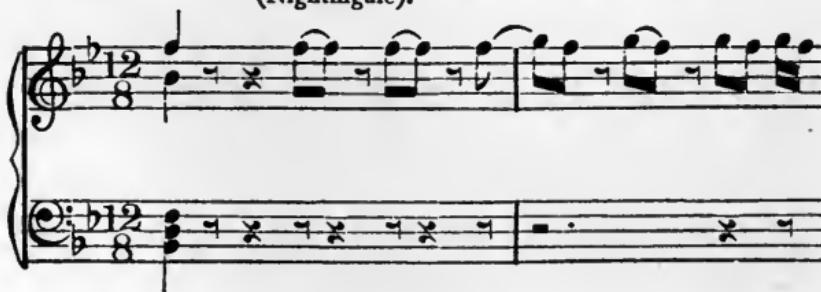
"Though the poet carries on his monologue, or dialogue, in a progressively marked rhythm,

yet the disclaimer, for the more accurate elucidation of the sense, must make cæsuras and pauses in places where the poet could not venture on any interpunctuation. To this extent, then, is this style of declaiming applicable to music, and it is only to be modified according to the number of persons coöperating in the performance of a musical composition."

Yet in spite of all these indications of the direction in which music was moving with Beethoven, his instinct for beauty kept him from allowing mere delineation to become his ideal. As Sir Hubert Parry well says, the *Pastoral Symphony* is like a manifesto on that point. Of all Beethoven's works, it ventures farthest into the domain of program music. It contains actual imitations of sounds and sights in nature, as the rippling of the brook (strings); the muttering of thunder (contrabasses in their low register); flashes of lightning (violins); the bassoon of an old peasant sitting on a barrel, and able to play but three tones; and the song of the nightingale (flute), quail (oboe), and cuckoo (clarinet.) All the movements bear descriptive titles, as follows: "The awakening of happy feelings on arriving in the country; Scene by the

brook; Merry gathering of peasants; Thunder-storm; Shepherd's song—Rejoicings and thankfulness after the storm." It is obvious that here Beethoven was pushing the descriptive power of music to its limits. Yet it is important to note that even here neither his instinctive sense of the proper uses of the musical art nor his reasoned conviction as to the nature of musical expression forsook him. Throughout the growlings of the thunder, the music pursues its way coherently and accordingly to its own laws. The rhythmic scheme and the harmonic sequence are maintained, and the general structure is not for a moment forgotten. After the imitation of the bird-notes, in the second movement, the musical sentence is rounded out to completion by the lovely concluding phrase, imitated by various instruments. (See Fig. XXIX).

Figure XXIX. The bird-notes in the Pastoral Symphony.
(Nightingale).



BEETHOVEN AND HIS FORERUNNERS

tr.....

(Quail) (Cuckoo)

.....:

pp.

.....

.....

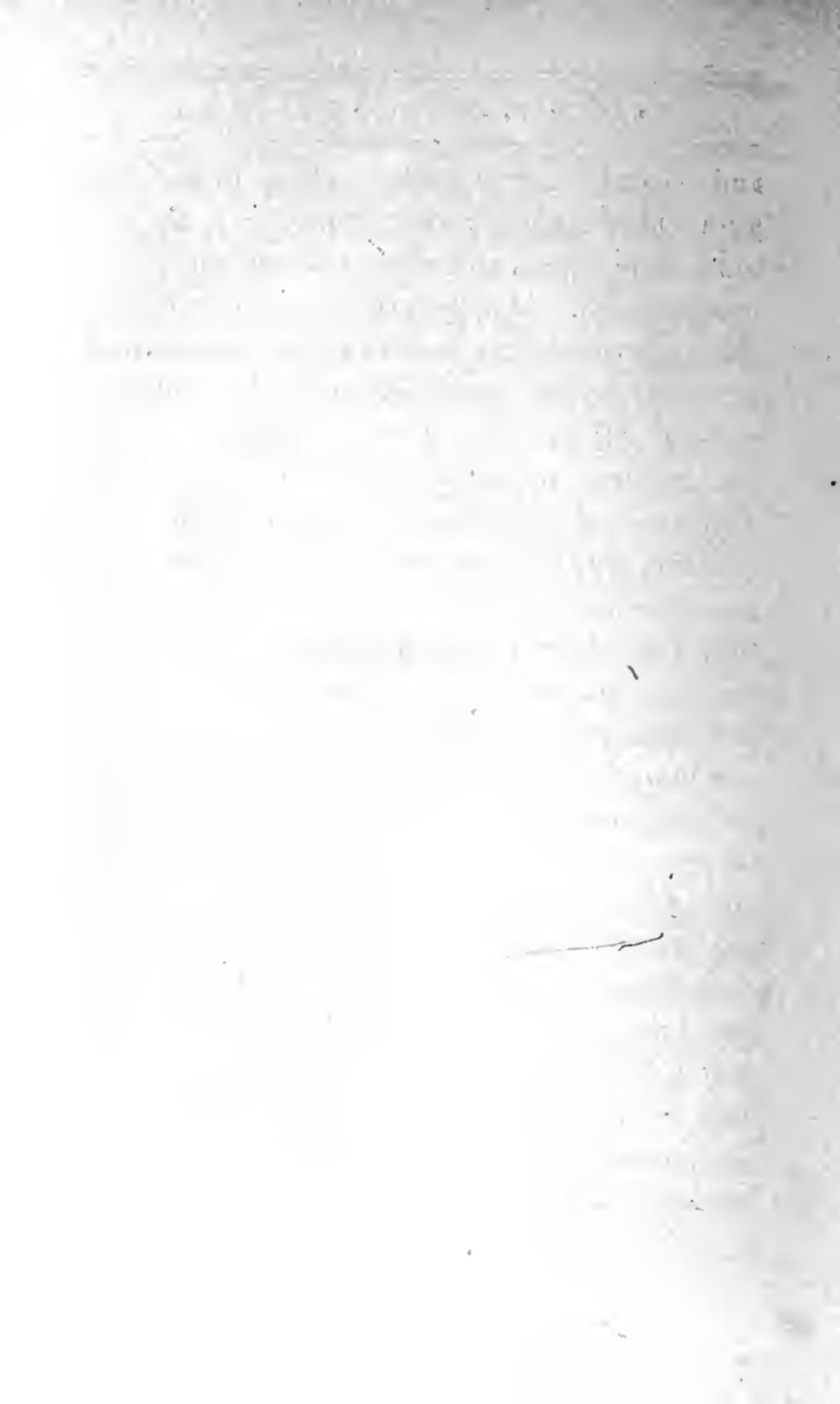
BEETHOVEN—CONTINUED

Four staves of Beethoven piano music, likely from the first movement of the Fifth Symphony. The music is in common time and consists of measures 11 through 15. The top staff shows a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a dynamic of *tr.* The second staff shows a bass clef. The third staff shows a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a dynamic of *pp.* The fourth staff shows a bass clef. The music features eighth and sixteenth note patterns, with some notes marked with 'x' and 'z' and grace notes indicated by 'K' over stems. Measure 11: Treble staff: eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note. Bass staff: eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note. Measure 12: Treble staff: eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note. Bass staff: eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note. Measure 13: Treble staff: eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note. Bass staff: eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note. Measure 14: Treble staff: eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note. Bass staff: eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note. Measure 15: Treble staff: eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note. Bass staff: eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note.

It is only necessary to play the bird-notes alone, omitting the supplementary phrase, to see how much of the effect is a matter of pure music. And that Beethoven realized this himself, that he was clearly aware that music affects us more by setting up vague but potent emotions in us by means of a beautiful embodiment of expressive sounds than by merely copying what is in the actual world, is evidenced by the motto he inscribes at the head of his score : "Mehr Ausdruck der Empfindung als Malerei" — "More the expression of feeling than painting." Even more succinct, if that is possible, is a note in one of his sketch books : "Pastoral Symphony : no picture, but something in which the emotions are expressed which are aroused in men by the pleasure of the country."

This attitude of Beethoven's towards program music, both in practice and in theory, is but a crucial and striking example of his general attitude towards music, an attitude produced both by the tendencies of the historic moment and by his native genius. Had he had less capacity or taste for expression of the most definite and vivid emotions, he would not have been able to carry music beyond the formalism of Haydn

and Mozart, and to make it voice the self-conscious idealism, the romantic intensity, the various, many-sided, and profound spiritual life, of modern men. Had he not, on the other hand, clung pertinaciously to the plastic beauty which, after all, is the most indispensable quality of musical art, had he allowed his interest in the characteristic to betray him into literalism, he would have deprived music of that period of full maturity which he represents, and ushered in too soon the inevitable decadence, in which art is no longer whole and balanced, but seeks special effects and particular expressions, becomes meteoric, dazzling, and fragmentary. That period was bound to come, as the parabola must make its descending as well as its ascending curve, or the plant have its autumn as well as its spring and summer. But before the appealing, but pathetically incomplete work of the romanticists came to give a sort of Indian summer brightness to the musical year, it was meet that it should have its full harvest of ripe, sound, and wholesome beauty. And this it had, in the incomparably sane and noble works of the mature Beethoven.



CHAPTER IX CONCLUSION



CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION



HE third and last period of Beethoven's life, from 1813 to 1827, during which he produced the remarkable later pianoforte sonatas and string quartets, the Quintet, opus 104, the Wind Octet, opus 103, the noble Missa Solennis, which he considered his greatest work, and the immortal Ninth or Choral Symphony, was a time of affliction and wretchedness. The record of these bitter years of the deaf, lonely, poverty-hounded master, surrounded by unfeeling relatives and indifferent and dishonest servants, stricken with disease, and laboring through all to realize his grand artistic conceptions, is relieved only by his unflinching fortitude and grim humor. The heroic spirit of the man matched his misfor-

tunes. For him, if for any one, the boast of the stoic poet would have been justifiable:

“ In the fell clutch of circumstance
 I have not winced nor cried aloud;
Under the bludgeonings of chance
 My head is bloody but unbowed.”

There was something almost diabolically sinister in the fate that placed Beethoven, so sensitive to personalities, so peculiarly in need of tranquillity for the pursuit of his ideas, in the midst of such a pack of rascally kindred. The great canker of his life was his nephew, Carl, left his ward, in 1815, by the death of his brother. A loafer in billiard-rooms, a devotee of cheap amours, a dissipated, frivolous, and wholly irreverent weakling, this young man looked upon his uncle simply as a source of florins, having apparently no respect for his age, his sufferings, or his genius. To make matters worse, Beethoven found it necessary, in order to secure the boy's custody, to go to law against his mother, whom he picturesquely and significantly named “The Queen of the Night.” He was involved in endless lawsuits to gain the very responsibilities which proved so heavy and so fruitless. Carl rewarded all this care and love

CONCLUSION

by holding clandestine meetings with his mother, by squandering his uncle's hard-earned money, by neglecting the commissions which the composer, deaf and ill, was obliged to entrust to him ; and finally, brought to the verge of despair by his own weakness, he attempted suicide, was locked up in an asylum, and was eventually packed off to the army. In all Beethoven's struggles with his nephew he got no help from the boy's other uncle, the "land-owner" of the anecdote, Johann van Beethoven, whom the composer bitterly called his "pseudo-brother." This complacent apothecary saw no need of helping a brother who was one of the greatest artists living, and whose life was being slowly sapped by sordid anxieties. Doubtless Beethoven was a man difficult to help — a man of high temper, perverse whims, uncompromising speech. But the story, nevertheless, is an unpleasant one, in which young Carl and old Johann Beethoven play unenviable rôles.

In his contact with these wretched relatives Beethoven was not supported by a comfortable, congenial home. A bachelor, poor, absent-minded, and engrossed in abstract pursuits, he

was at the mercy of rapacious landlords and self-seeking or incompetent servants. After 1816, when, largely for his nephew's sake, he began keeping house, he was given hardly a moment of ease by what he called his "domestic rabble." His letters are full of indignant protests or half-humorous jibes against "the old "witch," or "Satanas," as he called his house-keeper—a half-crazy beldame who not only neglected his table and let the dust thicken on his books, but on one occasion actually used the manuscript of a part of his great Mass to wrap around old boots. "My dear Son," he writes (it was thus that he habitually addressed his nephew), "It is impossible to permit this to continue any longer; no soup to-day, no beef, no eggs, and at last *broiled meat* from the inn! Little as I require what nourishes the body, as you know, still the present state of things is really too bad, besides being every moment in danger of being poisoned." Another time he exclaims: "Here comes *Satanas* . . . What a reproach to our civilization to stand in need of a class like this, and to have those whom we despise constantly near us." How must Beethoven have felt when the nephew

CONCLUSION

whom he had trusted as a son descended so low as to borrow money surreptitiously from, this very "Satanas"? "Last Sunday," he writes, "you again borrowed 1 florin 15 kreutzers from the housekeeper, from a mean old kitchen wench,—this was already forbidden,—and it is the same in all things. What avail even the most gentle reproofs? They merely serve to embitter you. But do not be uneasy; I shall continue to care for you as much as ever."

Another constant harassment of Beethoven in his later years was poverty. The annuity settled upon him by his patrons was so seriously decreased by a depreciation in the value of paper money and by the deaths of some of the donors that it eventually amounted to only four hundred dollars a year. "If my salary," he wrote in 1822, "were not so far reduced as to be no salary at all, I would write nothing but symphonies for a full orchestra, and church music, or at most quartets." As it was, he had to devote a part of his time to writing for money, a servitude intensely distasteful to one so devoted to high artistic ideals, so constitutionally incapable of compromise. He puts the best face

on the matter, jokes about it as he does about everything ; but it is obvious that he suffered much to gather the florins his nephew so easily spent. "I wander about here with music paper, among the hills and dales and valleys, and scribble a great deal to get my daily bread ; for I have brought things to such a pass that in order to gain time for a great composition, I must always previously scrawl away a good deal for the sake of money." But his attitude towards publishers remained dignified, considerate ; he knew how to respect his own work and rights without falling into the petty egotism of the so-called "artistic temperament." "I must apprise you," he writes Herr Peters of the well-known Leipzig publishing house, "that I cannot accept less than 50 ducats for a string quartet, and 70 for a pianoforte one, without incurring loss ; indeed, I have repeatedly been offered more than 50 ducats for a violin quartet. I am, however, always unwilling to ask more than necessary, so I adhere to the sum of 50 ducats, which is, in fact, nowadays the usual price. I feel positively ashamed when I have to ask a price for a really great work. Still, such is my position that it obliges me to secure every

CONCLUSION

possible advantage. It is very different, however, with the work itself; when I never, thank God, think of profit, but solely of how I write it." It is a similar dignified sense of his responsibilities, far removed from vanity, that prompts him to request of an editor notice of his nomination as an honorary member of the Royal Swedish Musical Academy. "Although neither vain nor ambitious," he says, "still I consider it advisable not wholly to pass over such an occurrence, as in practical life we must live and work for others, who may often eventually benefit by it." The sincerity of these convictions is proved by the fact that after Beethoven's death in poverty, eight bank-shares were found among his papers, carefully preserved by him for the legacy of his nephew.

Beethoven's deafness went on steadily increasing. That is a pathetic picture his friend Schindler gives of him, improvising with all the enthusiasm of his inner inspiration on the violin or the viola, which, because of his inability to tune them, gave out the most distressing, discordant sounds. On the piano it was but little better; he had to guide himself largely by sight, and his touch became harsh and heavy. The effect

of this malady on his character, already mentioned in Chapter VII, and recognized by himself in his "Will," * grew as time went on more profound. He became morbidly suspicious, withdrew himself entirely from casual social intercourse, and distrusted even his best friends. Friendly consultations in his behalf he interpreted as collusions against him, and resented with all the violent anger of his intense, willful, and frank nature. When Lichnowsky, Schuppanzigh, and Schindler met at his room, as if by chance, to discuss a concert they were planning for the presentation of the Missa Solennis and the Ninth Symphony, his suspicions were so aroused that he wrote the three faithful disciples as follows :

To Lichnowsky :

"Insincerity I despise ; visit me no more ; my concert is not to take place.

"Beethoven."

To Schuppanzigh :

"Come no more to see me. I give no concert.

"Beethoven."

* See page 276.

To Schindler :

“ Do not come to me till I summon you.
No concert.

“ Beethoven.”

The dogmatic, domineering habit of mind here illustrated, the obverse side of Beethoven's strong will and high self-reliance, doubtless did much to intensify the loneliness and the difficulties of his old age. Yet even here there is something noble, something that commands as much admiration as pity, about this wounded hero, this lion at bay.

The last scene of Beethoven's troublous life opens in October, 1826, when, already aged and broken, though but fifty-six years old, he was obliged to seek, in the house of his “pseudobrother” Johann, at Krems, fifty miles from Vienna, a refuge for Carl, who had been ordered out of Vienna by the civil authorities after his attempt at suicide. Sir George Grove gives a picture of the oddly-assorted group of actors: “The pompous money-loving land-proprietor; his wife, a common frivolous woman of questionable character; the ne'er-do-well nephew, intensely selfish and ready to make game of his

uncle or to make love to his aunt; and in the midst of them all the great composer—deaf, untidy, unpresentable, setting every household rule at defiance, by turns entirely absorbed and pertinaciously boisterous, exploding in rough jokes and hoarse laughter, or bursting into sudden fury at some absolute misconception." Beethoven, whose health was already seriously undermined, was obliged to sit in a cold room at his work, his brother being unwilling to go to the expense of a fire, and to eat unwholesome, ill-cooked food, for which however board-money was rigorously exacted. By early December there was an open rupture between the two brothers, and the composer and Carl, resolved to leave the place, yet denied the closed carriage of the niggardly Johann, risked the fifty-mile journey, in winter weather, in a hired open wagon. It was Beethoven's death blow. Reaching home after two days' exposure, he took to his bed, with his digestive troubles much aggravated, and an inflammation of the lungs. A little later dropsy set in, and four operations had to be undergone. As the doctors drew out the water Beethoven said grimly: "Better from my belly than from my pen." Early in the new

CONCLUSION

year he rallied, and planned fresh compositions. He amused himself with the romances of Scott, but at last threw them down, exclaiming angrily : “ The man writes for money.” Soon he began to fail again. On March 24th, rapidly sinking, he just found strength to whisper to the friends at his bedside : “ Plaudite, amici, comoedia finita est.” After a desperate struggle of two days, his vigorous constitution at last succumbed, and he died on the evening of March 26th, 1827.

Of the compositions of Beethoven’s last period the most conflicting opinions have been held. Musicians of the Wagner and Liszt school have seen in the Ninth Symphony the opening of a door into a new realm of art, greater, freer, more deeply expressive than any that had gone before. Critics less in sympathy with the tendencies of romanticism, however, have interpreted the last phase of Beethoven’s career as a decadence, the necessary result of flagging vitality and of his previous exhaustion of the legitimate effects of pure music. They have pointed out that his deafness made him indifferent to the actual sensuous effect of his combinations of tone ; that his increasing fondness for the subtleties of polyphony was not supported by ade-

quate early training; and that the isolation and sufferings of his life gradually undermined the sanity and marred the balance of his art. Probably there is some truth in each of these views.

It is certain that Beethoven, in his last quartets and pianoforte sonatas, and in the Ninth Symphony, showed for the first time the feasibility of those special, highly individualized expressions of feeling in music which were afterwards wrought out in great variety and profusion by Schubert, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Chopin, Liszt, and the other composers of the Romantic school. He not only made music, as we have already seen, a language as well as an art, but he set the fashion, in his last compositions, of regarding its powers of eloquent and definite utterance as of even greater importance than its general plastic beauty. From the point of view of interest, this was an advance; and judged from this standpoint Beethoven was a pioneer in that movement towards characteristic expression which has been so important a part of the musical activity of our time.

But every advance, in art as well as in life, is made at a certain cost, and the price of this increase in complexity and preciseness of ex-

CONCLUSION

pression was a loss of artistic wholeness and poise. As a monument of pure beauty embodied in tones, the Ninth Symphony hardly holds its own beside the Eighth, so much smaller and less ambitious. One misses in it the sense of reserve power, of restraint, of firmly controlled balance of means and ends. The passionate spirit of the work jars and disrupts its body. Music is strained to its limit of power; and great as is the result, the success seems too much like a feat of genius, done in despite of natural laws. In all Beethoven's later works there is this uncomfortable sense of strain and labor. He achieves the well-nigh impossible, but it is at the cost of serenity.

In view of the circumstances, we may think it could hardly have been otherwise. Long-continued deafness had made Beethoven insensitive to the sensuous basis of music. He considered less and less the actual sound of his fabric of tones, more and more their purely intellectual and ideal relations. The pages of the final sonatas and quartets bristle with passages as distressing to hear as they are interesting to contemplate. This tendency to harshness was reënforced by his growing addiction to contra-

puntal writing. His natural style was that monophonic or harmonic style initiated by the Florentine reformers and passed on to him through Haydn and Mozart. But as he meditated, ever more profoundly, he came to see its inadequacy, and constantly felt out more and more in the direction of polyphony ; he endeavored to graft the fugue and the canon upon sonata-form. His early training, however, was insufficient for such a task ; his limitations in counterpoint had been correctly gauged by his teacher, Albrechtsberger ; and when in his maturity he attempted to write polyphonically, he became crabbed, awkward, and discordant. His instinct was right, but his skill did not support him. In choral writing, again, to which he devoted himself with increasing enthusiasm as he grew older, he was at a disadvantage. He disregarded the natural conditions of the voice ; he never really mastered vocal style ; and when he introduced a chorus into his last and most gigantic symphony, he attempted more than he could satisfactorily execute. The choral part of that symphony is exceedingly difficult ; and the audience is made almost as uneasy by it as the chorus.

CONCLUSION

The isolation in which he finally came to live, and the natural independence of his character, added their influence to those of physical and technical limitations. As he cared less for general intelligibility, and more for the logical carrying out, to their extremes, of the implications of his ideas, his music became more and more abstruse. His constantly increasing interest in intellectual subtleties, on which his great and lonely mind naturally concentrated itself, was not regulated by a sufficient perception of the sensuous qualities of his work—for he was deaf; and consequently the balance was destroyed, the great sanative touch of the actual was lost, and his music became distorted and grotesque. Some of the fugues in his later quartets and piano sonatas sound more like audible problems in chess or mathematics than like “the concord of sweet sounds.”

Suffering so extreme as Beethoven's had its inevitable effect, too, on the whole general tone and quality of his artistic utterance. He learned the lessons of sorrow as few men have ever learned them; temporal misfortune taught him to impersonalize his ideals, to turn to the eternal sources of hope in his inmost spirit, and to

interpret the joys and sorrows not of his separate self merely, but of all humanity ; but at the same time that his spirit was thus chastened, purified, and expanded, it was shorn of its primitive vigor, its pristine elasticity, energy, and animation. If the music of his prime is the music of pagan idealism, that of his later years is the music of stoicism—the stern and noble stoicism of Marcus Aurelius, touched with the tenderness and spiritual joy of Christ. It breathes a high serenity, a transfigured human happiness, attainable only to a great soul after much suffering. If any mortal artist could be justified in such a boast, Beethoven was justified when he wrote : “ I do not fear for my works. No evil can befall them ; and whosoever shall understand them, he shall be freed from all the misery that burdens mankind.”

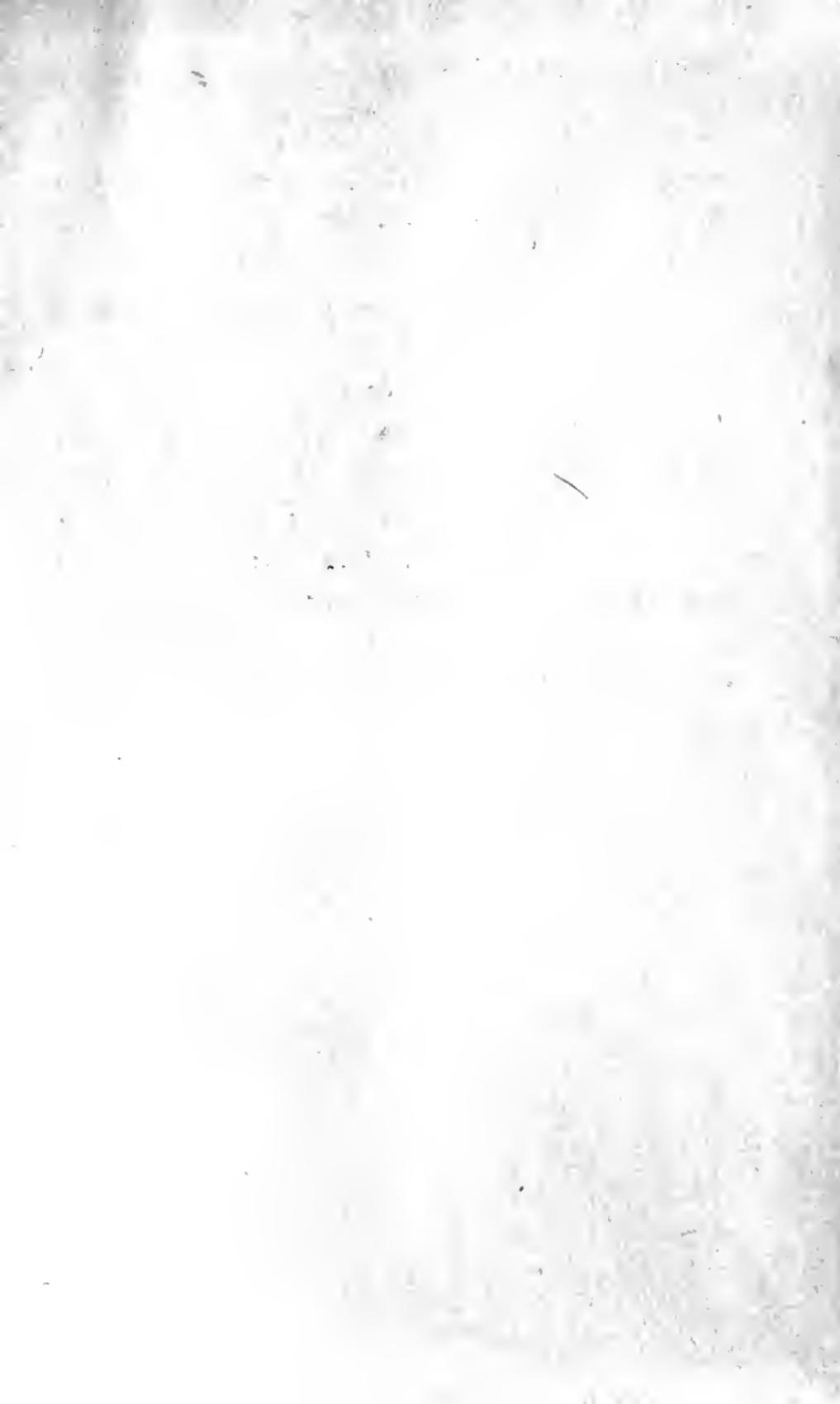
Stop here

As we take a last backward glance over the life of Beethoven, and over that larger life of the art of music in the classical period, of which it was the final stage, we cannot but be profoundly impressed by the unity and continuity of the whole evolution. From its first slight and tentative beginnings in the experiments of the

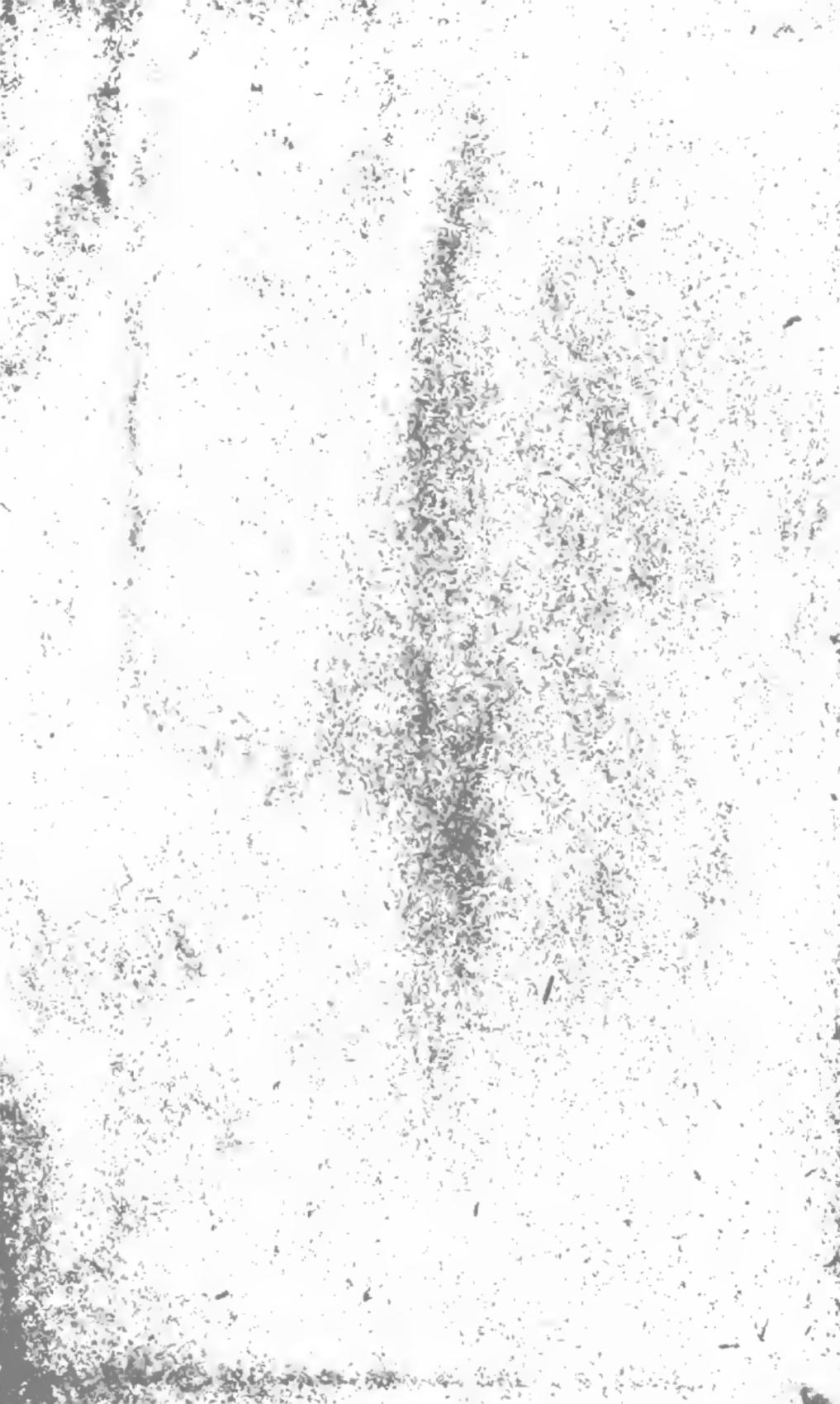
CONCLUSION

Florentine reformers, secular music, the art of expressing through the medium of tones, the full, free, and harmonious emotional life of modern idealism gradually acquired, through the labors of the seventeenth-century composers, definiteness of aim and technical resources. Then, in the work of Haydn and Mozart, it reached the stage of maturity, of self-consciousness ; it became flexible, various, many-sided, adequate to the demands made upon it ; it emerged from childhood, and took its honored place in the circle of independent and recognized arts. Finally, it was brought by Beethoven to its ripe perfection, its full flowering. It was made to say all that, within its native limitations, it was capable of saying. It reached the fullness of life beyond which it could live only by breaking itself up into new types, as the old plant scatters forth seeds. And even these new types were dimly divined, and suggested to his successors, by Beethoven. Was it not his effort to express, in absolute music, the most various shades of personal, highly specialized feeling, vigorous, sentimental, mystical, or selfishly wayward, that inspired the romantic composers, Schubert, Schumann, Chopin, and

their fellows, to pursue even further the same quest? Was it not his feeling out toward novel dramatic effects in the combined chorus and orchestra, in the Ninth Symphony, that showed Wagner the path he must take? Was it not his attempts, defeated by insufficient technical skill, to combine the polyphony of the sixteenth century with the harmonic and rhythmic structure of the nineteenth, that suggested to Brahms, more fully equipped, his great enterprise? Thus even the failures of a great man are full of promise; and Beethoven, and all his forerunners too, still live and speak to us in the music of to-day.







UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY
Los Angeles

This is DUE on the last date stamped below.

University of California
SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
Return this material to the library
from which it was borrowed.

LIBRARY

LIBRARY

Semi-Ann. Loan
FEB 23 1990
MAY 7 1990

REC'D MUS-LIB

MAR 16 1990

SRLF APR 19 1993
QL

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A 000 140 535 6

MUSIC
LIBRARY
ML
390
M38b

UNIVERSITY of CALIFORNIA
AT
LOS ANGELES
LIBRARY

a